DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 176 306 CS 205 151

AUTHOR Halliday, Mina Gail; Rang, Jack C.
TITLE Oral Interpretation and the Teaching of Language Arts.
INSTITUTION Illinois State Office of Education, Springfield.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 63p.; Language Arts Monograph; Not available in paper copy due to marginal legibility of original document

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Interpretive Reading; *Language Arts; *Literature; Minority Groups; Poetry; Prose; Reading Skills; Speech Communication; *Teaching Techniques

ABSTRACT

This monograph contains a series of discussions about the ways in which oral interpretation specialists view literature in its various genres and suggestions for oral interpretation techniques that might be applicable to literature instruction. The eight articles address the following specific topics: the fabric of literature, sensory approaches to the teaching of literature, teaching oral interpretation through choral speaking, plays and oral interpretation, the presence of the narrator in prose fiction, the interpreter's approach to poetry, actional procedures in teaching Afro-American literature, and the presence of literature. The monograph also includes lists of selected resources, professional organizations, and workshops and festivals, as well as a description of a videotape series designed to accompany the first article. (FL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED176306

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

LANGUAGE ARTS MONOGRAPH

Oral Interpretation and the Teaching of Language Arts

State Board of Education, Illinois Office of Education
Joseph M. Cronin
State Superintendent of Education

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Illinois Office of Education

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS205157

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

FOREWORD

In October, 1974, twenty Illinois language arts professors, teachers and Illinois Office of Education consultants met in Urbana to discuss and to respond to the need for materials especially written for classroom teachers of language arts. The Urbana meeting focused upon a plan to print a number of monographs, each one emphasizing language arts and each one fitting into a series of monographs suggesting the depth of language arts education.

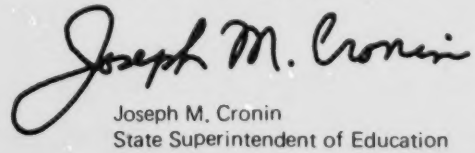
Following the Urbana meeting, monograph authors and editors collected, organized and explained ideas from nearly 50 Illinois contributors. Monograph titles, chapter titles, and section headings covering hundreds of currently employed language arts ideas and practices took shape.

The intent of all the monographs was to combine theory and practice into brief suggestions for classroom teachers of language arts. Although some of the suggestions are new to the profession, most reflect the best teaching practices by experienced Illinois teachers. Some monographs take controversial stances on issues, but even the controversial points of view are clearly within the realms of accepted pedagogy. As planned, all nine monographs report effective, often-used teaching practices.

Monograph authors and editors wrote from their own philosophies, and they wrote about the ways of teaching they knew best; no attempt was made to advance the cause of any particular educational practice or terminology. The monographs respond both to persistent issues as well as to modern trends in language arts education.

More than 50 teachers of language arts gave of their inspiration, time, and patience. Illinois students will profit from such professional efforts given for the good of education in Illinois.

A special thanks should be given to two Illinois Office of Education staff members — Mina Halliday and Alan Lemke. They conceived the idea for the monograph project, guided it to its completion, and made contributions to several monographs. The development of these monographs was a monumental effort to improve education in Illinois and the success of the project can be attributed to Ms. Halliday and Dr. Lemke.



Joseph M. Cronin
State Superintendent of Education

ORAL INTERPRETATION AND THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGE ARTS

Contributing Authors:

Dr. Wallace A. Bacon, Department of Interpretation, Northwestern University, Evanston

Dr. Robert S. Breen, Department of Interpretation, Northwestern University, Evanston

Dr. Lilla A. Heston, Department of Interpretation, Northwestern University, Evanston

Dr. Marion L. Kleinau, Department of Speech, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

Dr. Ralph R. Lane, Department of Theatre, Illinois State University, Normal

Ms. Yvonne Marion, Project SPEAK, East St. Louis

Dr. Janet L. McHughes, Department of Speech, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

Ms. Lillian Parks, Project SPEAK Director, East St. Louis

Dr. Jack C. Rang, Department of Theatre Arts, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston

Ms. Delores Tigue, Project SPEAK, East St. Louis

Ms. Brenda Watson, Project SPEAK, East St. Louis

Editors:

Ms. Mina Gail Halliday, Illinois Office of Education

Dr. Jack C. Rang, Department of Threatre Arts, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston

For "Sensory Image–An Approach to Teaching Literature"
Copyright Marion L. Kleinau and Janet L. McHughes 1978

The Illinois Office of Education wishes to acknowledge the following Illinois school districts, which cooperated in taking and setting up photographs in their schools for use in the monograph series.

Danville Community Consolidated District #118

Eastern Illinois University Summer Student Speech Workshop

East St. Louis District #189

Glenbrook North High School District #225

Granite City Community Unit District #9

Lincoln Community High School District #404

Lyons Township High School District #204

Mattoon High School District #2

St. Bede Academy

Township High School District #214

Wheaton High School District #200

TABLE OF CONTENTS

"By Way of Introduction . . ." Jack C. Rang	1
The Fabric of Literature" Jack C. Rang	2
"Sensory Approaches to the Teaching Literature" Marion L. Kleinau and Janet L. McHughes	7
"Teaching Oral Interpretation Through Choral Speaking" Lillian Parks and Yvonne Marion	20
"The Dramatic Dimension — Plays and Oral Interpretation" Ralph R. Lane and Jack C. Rang	26
"The Presence of the Narrator in Prose Fiction" Robert S. Breen	30
"Practical Prosody — the Interpreter's Approach to Poetry" Wallace A. Bacon	38
"Actional Procedures in Teaching Afro-American Literature" Delores Tigue and Brenda Watson	43
"The Presence of Literature" Lilla A. Heston	48
Selected Resources	54
Professional Organizations	55
Workshops and Festivals	55
Fabric of Literature Videotape Series	56

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION . . .

Jack C. Rang

The fundamental idea behind the articles in this collection is simple: students learn to read better, with more comprehension, more enjoyment, and with more awareness of the functions of the language when they learn to read and orally interpret and do it well. The concomitant of this premise is that students learn respect for the qualities of language and the emotional power that good literature produces when they hear a poem, a story, or a play effectively orally interpreted (read) by a teacher.

At this point, some of you are saying: "Oh, come on! The way you really learn literature is to sit in a quiet corner of the library or in your room at home, and just plow through Mark Twain or J.D. Salinger or Johnathan Swift. That's the way it's **always** been!" Are you sure? Let's take a mythical trip back in time about five hundred years and listen to a local citizen:

> "Here in the fifteenth century things are going along pretty much as they have for the last few hundred years. Books? Yes, we have a few, but not many. You see, for about the last twenty-five hundred years the only way to get a book published has been to have it copied out page by page. I understand, though, that there's a tinker in Germany who thinks he can make books faster. Some nut named Gutenberg. He has a clumsy-looking contraption he calls a printing press. It'll never work! Besides, who needs it? There's a better way that our local stories are saved. Each village has its storyteller, who keeps the facts and legends of the village alive. And there are people who wander around the countryside—vagabonds—they call themselves troubadors—and they sing stories."

> "Oh, not many people read here. The priest does—some—in Latin, but the rest of us have gotten along without it for a long time. What we know, the Mass, the laws, the folk stories, we know from memory. That's the way I learned them; that's the way my children have learned the ways of this place and the laws of the country. The wisest ones are those who can remember most and recite the best."

Is this imaginary conversation so unreasonable? It is fanciful, just as all imaginative literature is, but the important point is that the tradition of **silent** reading is a very **recent** one in the history of world literature. Old chronicles tell that fellow priests marveled at St. Jerome because he moved his eyes rapidly across the pages of a manuscript without **sounding out the words**, as was customary at that time. It was then taken for granted that the assimilation of literature was an **oral**, and an **aural**, matter. And the tradition of the oral performance of literary works is as old as our heritage from the Golden Age of Greece. Even in Athens textual transmission was largely a matter of oralization, and the performance of portions of the **Iliad** and the **Odyssey** were featured parts of celebrations. The readings even required specially trained performers, the **rhapsodes**.

"But," you say, "I've waded through a handful or more of the classics that I had to read in my literature classes as an undergraduate. There's no reason why the kids in my classes can't do the same thing." The obvious answer is that they **can**—and **some** of them will. But many or most of them can't or won't struggle through without some special attention-catching motivation. After all, we are competing for their attention; and, with radio, with television and film, we're battling professional audience-attracters. Our aim is to make literature **both** meaningful and enjoyable.

The articles that follow do not intend to offer some remarkable panacea for all the ills of the classroom; the only cure for "classroom complaint" is dedicated, innovative, daring teaching by someone who loves both the subject and the students. Oral interpretation will not wash away the nagging problems of syntax, grammar, and the other aspects of teaching English. What follows is really a series of discussions about the ways in which interpretation specialists view literature in its various genres, along with some notions about techniques currently used in oral interpretation which might be applied to your classroom. Let this monograph be a beginning. To borrow from Master Shakespeare, "On your imaginary forces work."

There is a second limitation to this monograph. It is NOT a "crash course" in oral interpretation. Our intent is to so excite you about the study of oral interpretation that you will want to read further in the resource materials suggested in the articles and in the selected resources section. Having read the theory, you may even be stimulated to enroll in classes in oral interpretation at a university near you. Oral interpretation is a **performance-based** skill, and it requires practice under the direction of qualified teachers to attain that skill.

If you have already had a basic exposure to oral interpretation, you may be inspired to take further study in the performance of one of the literary genres or in a special performance style. More and more summer workshops and symposiums are being offered. A partial list of these, and of persons to contact about other oral interpretation activities is to be found at the end of the collection.

The contributors hope you will find new answers to the basic problem this series explores: How can I teach language arts more effectively?

THE FABRIC OF LITERATURE

Jack C. Rang

NOTE: A video tape exemplifying concepts found in this article is available from the Illinois Office of Education. (See Selected Resources for address.)

If your students are like many of mine, they walk into your classroom with a basic mind-set about literature. I have never been brave enough to take a first-day sampling of opinion about that awesome ten-letter word, but I am sure the average response would be "Literature equals OLD, which equals DULL, so who needs it?" . . . "Why can't we study something modern?" . . . "Literature is a drag." The purpose of the following pages is to give you some ammunition against those arguments—to help you discover new ways to improve the odds in your efforts to make students more responsive to the many worlds of literature.

Let us start with basic premises about the nature of literature itself. In her book **Oral Interpretation**[1] Professor Charlotte Lee describes what she has termed the three "touchstones" which are basic to every piece of writing worthy of the name of literature.

Universality

Lee says the first thing to expect from a piece of good writing is that it have a **universal** appeal. That is, the writer must talk about some condition of being alive and human, something to which we can all relate. If you examine any literary anthology, you can see that Professor Lee is right. For example, about two-thirds of what we might term **artistic** writing is concerned in one way or another with the twin topics of love or death. As you think about the idea of universality in literature, I am sure other universal concerns will occur to you. Try sharing this idea with your students; let them discover that what they have considered as major "themes" in writing really fall rather neatly into one or another of the **universal concepts** areas. The first part of the literary triad is verifiable; universality is a basic determinant, a fundamental factor in literature. Moreover, once your students grasp the idea of universality, they will begin to connect literature and their own lives.

What literature might you consider for universal appeal? Well, there are two palys (out of hundreds) that come immediately to my mind: Robert Bolt's **A Man for All Seasons** would be at the top of my list, along with Joseph A. Walker's **The River Niger.** The way in which each play asserts the dignity of men who are willing to stand for their beliefs is certainly an age-old universal. In prose you might select Hermann Hesse's **Siddhartha**, John Knowles' **A Separate Peace**, or W.E.B. DuBois' autobiography. For poetry, Robert Frost, Gwendolyn Brooks, Anne Sexton, Carl Sandburg, or whoever appeals to you. Have the students read some of the poems or sections of the stories aloud, then, discuss the basic human appeal, the universal appeal, that is present in each.

Individuality

The second factor Lee describes as basic to all literature is that the universal idea must be handled in an **individual** way—a unique way. You are saying: "Of course, that is what separates good writing from the bulk of stuff that is trite, banal, and often—to our sorrow—popular." Exactly so. Good authors are those who can draw us into a new relationship with the universal idea. They show us a fresh angle, a new perspective on a common experience. Once again, your students will make discoveries as they begin to listen to both **good and bad** literature. They might compare similar universal ideas as expressed in the poems of, say, Theodore Roethke or Langston Hughes and, perhaps, a poem or two by Rod McKuen. They might read aloud Langston Hughes' story "Coffee Break" and compare it to a popular magazine article on interracial dialogue. The writing of Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. or of Ray Bradbury will also help to point out the way the unique, **individual** approach turns the banal into literature. If the school board permits, you might have them read in group performance some scenes from Vonnegut's play **Happy Birthday, Wanda June**, especially the scenes which speak to the issue of responsibility—personal and public—when an individual is in a position of having to follow orders.

Suggestibility

The third quality we look for in effective writing is what Lee (and other authors as well) calls **suggestion.** By this term she means that the author has not given us EVERYTHING that relates to the subject at hand. In fact, the things left **unsaid** may be more important to us than tht things that **are said.** Admittedly, this a harder concept to explain to students than are the first two. It is considerably more difficult to talk about an **absent** quality than it is to discuss one that is patently present. For my own classes I find that reference to Japanese **haiku**, as suggested by Professor Wallace Bacon, is a valuable way to demonstrate the quality of suggestion in a work.* If I read a **haiku** to

---

[1] Charlotte I. Lee, **Oral Interpretation**, fourth ed. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1972), **passim.**

* The use of **haiku** as a means for discussing the concept of suggestion in literature is also developed in some detail in Professor Bacon's text, **The Art of Interpretation**, second ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970).

them, then have them discuss it, they pick up the idea quickly. One they seem to like is:

Red leaves falling fast.
You are leaving; I remain.
For me, two autumns.

The seasonal qualities of the first line define the direction of the poem, but the "autumnness" of the poem extends so much farther. It is only the starting point for the **suggestions** of this poem. Try dividing your class into small groups, reading other **haiku**. Let them discuss the poems, then bring them back to share with the rest of the class.

Another short poetry form that also functions this way is the very concrete four-line poetry the Chinese call "stop-short." They offer a wide range of suggested emotion. Oral sharing and small-group discussion also works well with such modern poets as Robert Frost or Carl Sandburg. Frost's "The Road Not Taken" begins with just such an element. Why is the poem called the "road NOT taken?" Of course, it suggests some very positive things about the road that **was** taken. Decisions are important to all of us, and we often look back at the way we didn't go. Another modern poet who makes great use of the element of suggestion is Sylvia Plath. Help your students listen

to the suggestions in such poems as "Mushrooms," "The Arrival of the Bee Box," and others. Or Gwendolyn Brooks' "We Real Cool," while more concrete, still offers many other ideas in the last line of the poem. Langston Hughes' "Dream Boogie" is just one of many with a range of suggestion beyond the poem. The concept works in prose, too. The suspened endings of Ray Bradbury's stories are one example, as is the strange world of J.R. R. Tolkien's hobbits, dwarfs, and dragons.

Activities

Once the idea is clear, send your class out into the world of the literature **they** know—popular song lyrics. Have them bring back and share through their own readings, not through the recordings, the elements of universality, individuality, and suggestion in contemporary literature. They might listen to Leonard Cohen, Joni Mitchell, Stephen Stills, Judy Collins, the Moody Blues' Mike Pinder. "Dawn is a Feeling" is one of his that does a lot with all three elements, as does Joni's "Cactus Tree." *All of these are totally reachable sources of the concepts. Moreover, when they bring these poets into the classroom to share by reading them aloud, the classroom and the outside world make contact in a vibrant and an important way. Literature is not just "in a book," it is in the air they breathe.

A word of caution about these readings: Make them as **casual** as you can. Students should not feel that this is some sort of "Performance"; it is only an act of sharing, an exploration into a new way of looking at the process of creative writing.

This preliminary exercise in the basic design of literature is certainly not restricted to any particular grade level. In fact, primary children are often more receptive, more imaginative, and more creative in these activities than are their high school counterparts. And the earlier we can help students to an awareness of the basic elements of literature, the sooner we can reduce their dislike of that ten-letter word. So, let the primary classes in on the "touchstones" idea. They can cope with it and share in it through their own literature and on their own level.

You have already though of the obvious follow-up to your classes' investigations into the three extrinsic factos of literature: simple writing exercises in which the stu-

*For an interesting comparison of contemporary song lyrics with some poetry "classics" see David Morse, **Grandfather Rock** (New York, Delacorte Press, 1972), also available in Laurel-Leaf Library, Dell Publishing Co., 1973.

dents create their own examples, embodying the basic ingredients of all good literature. It will probably be best for you to suggest an imaginative theme—perhaps a dream or a fantasy—to get them started. This assignment is NOT a "What I Did Last Summer" kind of topic. It is an adventure in life.

The creative writing sessions should be followed by oral readings of the new creations, first by the authors, and then by other members of the class. Your students will spend far more of their lives reading what **other people** have written than they will in reading their own poetry or prose. For this re-reading work be sure to allow at least two days between the author's reading and the re-creation of the work by someone else in the class. The group needs to let that first reading fade into memory a bit in order for the second reading not to be a carbon copy of the first. You might want to divide the class into smaller groups for at least part of this re-creation reading. Insist that, at no time, is the author to give any help—either asked or unasked—to the second reader. The writing must stand on its own merits, and the author must learn to tune his ear to the **sound** of language in order to make it flow smoothly and clearly in his writing.

Your students' investigations into the extrinsic elements that transform a series of words into a work of literature are great as beginning exercises; but the heart of literature does not reside in the **terms** by which it is defined. The basis for all effective communication—oral or written—lies in the way we **as people** respond to the work, for human experience is the real beginning point for all good writing. In the most real and direct sense literature is the record of what happened to someone, in some place, at some time. To put it another way, **literature is experience recorded in an organized and artistic fashion, in order that other people may recreate the experience.*** This notion will not strike you as new or shocking, but it may come as a new idea to your students. It is important that they become acquainted with the fact that we "experience" on different levels at different times in our lives. For example, the child who lives in that middle-earth between infancy and adolescence knows all about dreaming and imagining. Stories and poems and plays that speak to the "dream" part of his/her experience are very important to the child. He/she has stalked deer in the wilderness, piloted a space ship to Mars, won the championship prize for athletic abilities. She/he has saved her/his family from the invaders, healed the ailing animal that everyone else thought would die, given children the medicine they needed, then led them out of the pathless swamp. For children these dreams are as real as life experiences of more tangible kinds. For them, finding stories and poems to read aloud—to share with other class members—becomes a re-experiencing of a world they really "know."

To see how this kind of sharing can lead to interesting and valuable creative writing experiences for children from the primary through the junior high grades, let me recommend two books by poet Kenneth Koch. One is titled **Wishes, Lies, and Dreams**, the other Koch calls **Rose, Where Did You Get That Red?*** Both books are filled with exciting examples of creative poetry that spring from the children's identification with a variety of experiences—wishes, dreams, yes, and lies, too. Of particular importance to our discussion is the fact that Koch regularly uses **oralization** of the writing efforts of his classes as a means of sharing the experience. Koch reports that when students in one class heard their own dreams expressed poetically by another, younger, class, they were anxious to try their hands at poetic "dreaming," too.

Theme

If we can agree that the fundamental basis for all literature is experience, perhaps we can also agree that the creation of literature can be likened to an **imaginative weaving** process. If you take a piece of fabric (burlap works well if you are doing this for your classes), you can see that one series of threads of yarns runs the **length** of the cloth, while another, often very different, kind of threads runs across the **width**. Consider for a moment that the cloth itself is a novel or a short story. The author has taken a segment of the world around him—whether the experience is autobiographical or a philosophic observation of that world is unimportant at this point. He/she has selected from the bulk of that experience, spun out the yarns, and has arranged them to run the

*The original synthesis of this concept appeared in a now-out-of-print volume by Wallace A. Bacon and Robert S. Breen, **Literature as Experience** (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959).

*Kenneth Koch's books are available in paperback, published by Vintage Press.

length of the work. His/her experience, observations have become the basic, unifying factors—the **theme** or underlying direction of the story.

The value of this idea of "experience as theme" is that your students can become aware of the story **as a unified whole**, built on a single experiential line. Digressions become only a unique part of the design; they are not, or should not be, considered separable elements apart from the whole. This notion of experiential unity is made abundantly clear when a story is read aloud. The flow of the language matches the direction of the story. To demonstrate this idea, you might try the following project:

> Take a **section** of a story—it doesn't matter whether you choose the beginning, the middle, or the end. Ask half-a-dozen of your students to take the sections home, read them several times to become familiar with them, and then bring the sections back to class to read aloud for the rest of the group.
>
> You may want to give the readers access to the whole story so they can see how their sections contribute to the entire work.

After the readings, listen to the comments from both readers and audience as they confront the problem of hearing only a **segment** of a unified work. The difficulty is most intense for the readers. In their introductions they will often try to explain what has preceded their reading, apologizing for the fact that their digest of the story is not really as complete as the original itself. Audiences, too, usually want to know "how it comes out at the end." You can also make a group game out of this exercise.

> Divide a story into small units; give each unit to a class member to prepare, then let one person start to read. The student may be interrupted at any time by someone who thinks his/her selection precedes his/hers. Continue until the whole story is reassembled in correct order as the participants hear the connections.

The result of this game is that the class becomes aware that a story, a poem, or a play is **not** an unrelated series of sentences, but a unified stream of experience which has a clearly defined and definable beginning, middle, and ending—just as Aristotle observed a long time ago.

Experience as the basic ingredient in good writing becomes even more apparent as your students begin to select their own materials for reading, both in class and outside as well. The first question you need to ask always is: "Why did you choose this particular selection?" The usual answer is: "Because I liked it." And that answer leads you to the obvious "Why?" which brings you—and the student—around to the fact that their choices are most often rooted in their **own** experiences—either actual or vicarious. Reading the selection aloud permits the student to either re-experience the event or to experience it through imagination. Either way is valuable to the development of awareness of literature as an affective part of their lives.

Attitude

Now, let's look again at that piece of cloth with which we began this discussion. We have examined the vertical yarns and have seen their part in the structure, but an equally important part of the fabric is that which gives it unique design while holding it together. These are the weft yarns. As you know, the cross-wise, weft yarns can be quite different from the warp. Silk may be interwoven with linen, dacron is mixed with cotton, rayon can cross yarns with wool. The finished effect of the fabric is truly determined by these weft yarns.

When we began to talk about the stories your class selected to read, we considered the organization of the author's experience of the world as basic to the continuity of the story. But the truly individualizing part of the work comes from the way in which the author looks at the basic experience. In a later article in this collection, Professor Robert Breen discusses the whole matter of perspective or point of view as it relates to the narrator in prose fiction. For now, let us explore the idea that the author's **attitude** toward the experience—however that attitude is expressed—provides the second quality which determines the structure of a literary work. How the author **feels** about the experience sets his recital apart from all of the other writings on this same universal theme. **Attitude** determines the pattern; it is the **weft** of our literary tapestry.

Just as the weaver has a variety of yarns at his disposal for the weft of his fabric, so, too, does the author have at least four distinct ways for us to observe the attitude-weft of his literary fabric. Briefly, these are:

> Biography
> Title
> Language
> Speaker

To determine some of the experiences that shaped the author's attitude in a given selection, your students may want to find out more about the writer as a person. If the story or author is not a modern one, they will probably discover they are learning some history along with literature as they read about the author's place in time, where and how he/she lived. This information will make the writer more real as a

person to the reader. But you need to be aware of the danger that lurks in the purely "biographical" approach to the study of literature. Students tend to see the facts of an author's life as **always** present in his/her work. Sometimes, it is true, a work is highly autobiographical. But perhaps just as frequently the author will elect to choose another **persona** to speak in the work. Like the rest of us, an author wears different masks for different parts of his/her life. The author, too, changes masks from situation to situation. We can never be sure we are actually seeing the author in the work; we can only see the **mask** he/she projects in a particular story as a particular experience is related. Biography is a useful source of information about the way a life situation **may** have affected a given work, but it is not an infallible guide.

Another way in which an author tells us something about his/her attitude is through the choice of a TITLE. Though some titles are the additions of later editors, most writers use some sort of caption from which we may learn about the contents that follow. Check the titles of a few stories or poems for yourself—then send your students on the same mission. Their task will be to determine the author's attitude JUST FROM THE TITLE. After making this determination, they should read the selection to see whether the author has, in fact, kept his/her promise. Your students will bring in examples of both good and bad titles. Some will not achieve what they led the reader to expect. The principal gain here is not to praise some writers and condemn others. Rather, the aim is to have your students' ears and minds attuned to attitude form the **start** of a selection, not at some nebulous mid-point along the way.

The third way to discover attitude is a very organic and continuing one: tune the students' ears to the WORDS that are chosen to express the author's experience. That an author will often use a variety of dictions, depending upon the subject, is perhaps most simply demonstrated by using the richly diverse vocabulary of Mark Twain as an example. The invented dialect of Huckleberry Finn is quite different from the language used by the narrator of **The Gilded Age** or some of Twain's short stories.

> Choose two or three Twain stories, excerpts from Huck Finn or Tom Sawyer and from "Cannibalism in the Cars" or "Buck Fanshaw's Funeral," or "How I Edited an Agricultural Paper." Have various people read sections of each, then discuss the use and differences in language in each story.

Not only do the words of these stories help us to understand the author's attitude, but they also bring us into contact with our fourth contributor to attitude—the **PERSONA**—speaker. Huck Finn and Scotty Briggs in "Buck Fanshaw's Funeral" are certainly separable characters from the author. It may be argued that, in the latter story, the principal narrator is the author, but the impact of the story comes from Scotty, just as does Jim Baker's story about the bluejay. In another story, however, a story like "My Watch," the author-as-speaker is much more likely. And the effect of this speaker's language makes the author's attitude toward watch repairmen very apparent. Whether the feeling was Twain's or whether it was created for the story we do not know. We only know **this** speaker's attitude through the words he chooses, the words with which he criticizes—almost demolishes—the work of incompetent journeymen in all professions. Listen to the diction and sentence structure at the start of "My Watch."

> My beautiful new watch had run eighteen months without gaining or losing, and without breaking any part of its machinery or stopping. I had come to believe it infallible in its judgements about the time of day, and to consider its constitution and its anatomy imperishable. But at last, one night I let it run down. I grieved about it as if it were a recognized messenger and forerunner of calamity. But by and by I cheered up, set the watch by guess, and commanded my bodings and superstitions to depart. Next day I stepped into the chief jeweler's to set it by the exact time, and the head of the establishment took it out of my hand and proceeded to set it for me. Then he said, "She is four minutes slow—regulator wants pushing up." I tried to stop him—tried to make him understand that the watch kept perfect time. But no; all this human cabbage could see was that the watch was four minutes slow, and the regulator **must** be pushed up a little; and so, while I danced around him in anguish, and implored him to let the watch alone, he calmly and cruelly did the shameful deed. My watch began to gain. It gained faster and faster day by day. Within a week it sickened to a raging fever and its pulse went up to a hundred and fifty in the shade.

As you read the section above you discovered that the watch became personified in the extreme. And as the watch became more perfect and human, the people who came into contact with it became less and less perfect, until the jeweler who tampered with it was reduced to vegetable status. The speaker's attitude toward watch repairmen becomes increasingly clear as the story goes on. The watchmaker in this section is a "human cabbage" who goes about his "shameful deed" . . ."calmly and cruelly." Of course, these descriptive words set the tone—the attitude—toward all of the other repairmen who follow to wreak their havoc on the marvelous machine. The author's **diction** has defined the speaker's attitude in very clear fashion, even though

Twain has never said "I hate watch repairmen." The goal of this linguistic and syntactic probing is to tune students' ears to the tone of the speaker. By so doing the students become aware of the bias the author has established in his telling of the story.

In a later section of this monograph, Professor Robert Breen will be devoting an entire article to a discussion of the role of the **persona**-speaker in literature. This writer defers to Professor Breen to make the expression of attitude through speaker more clear.

Summary

To review, briefly, the four ways to discuss the shaping attitude of the work comes from an awareness of biography, of title, of language usage, and through the speaker in the work.

As you read on in this monograph, you will find a variety of ways to look at the shapes of various literary forms—and a variety of ways to get your students involved in reading both from an oral and from an aural standpoint. Another monograph in this series that will be of value is **Creative Drama As A Resource, K-12**, by Dr. John Sharpham. His work in the area of creative drama will be of special interest in extending the **physical** world of creative writing. You will certainly want to refer to the fine videotape demonstrations he has done, showing the use of creative drama in the classroom. His work bears directly on the extended applications of oral interpretation in seemingly nondramatic literature. Professor Sharpham's monograph and the videotapes of his demonstrations as well as a series of videotapes demonstrating oral interpretation techniques explained in this monograph are available from the Illinois Office of Education.

Let us conclude this discussion with this consideration: literature began as the **spoken** word; poets and authors have relied on the **sounds** of literature as the most stimulating communications device they have to reach their audiences. In a "mass communication" society, where students are bombarded by sounds of all sorts every day, do we dare NOT make literature equally alive? Hamlet's advice to the actors at Elsinore begins: "Speak the speech, I pray you . . . ." Let us challenge our students to do the same.

The Author

Dr. Jack Rang was an Associate Professor of Theatre Arts at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston and is now chairperson of the Speech Department. He worked as an announcer and radio/television actor before entering the teaching field. He has published articles relating to English studies as well as articles on oral interpretation.

SENSORY APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF LITERATURE

Marion L. Kleinau
and
Janet Larsen McHughes

NOTE: A videotape exemplifying concepts found in this article is available from the Illinois Office of Education. (see Selected Resources for the address.)

"The way to imagination, the highest level of mental experience, lies through the lower levels of sensory experience."

—John C. Eccles[1]

A sensory approach to the teaching of literature is offered, in this time of individual alienation and educational discontent, with the recognition that experiential learning procedures may stimulate a renewed interest in the study of literature. The approach suggested here is based upon the belief that the ultimate capacity to experience and understand the great works of the humanities tradition evolves from the ability to make vital connections between daily human experience and literary experience. Further, it appears to be at the level of high school or below that such a fusion is most successfully accomplished.

The methods suggested below stem from the theories of student-centered education, concepts of creative problem-solving, and the notion of play as a learning process.* From these theoretical backgrounds evolves a kind of literary study which demands student interaction with literature. In this interactive process, the student discovers not only the literary world, but his/her own creative human potential in relation to that world, and the possibilities of the application of his/her human potential to the physical and social worlds around.

Since all transactions between the student and the literary work have their base in sensory awareness, this section of the curriculum guide attempts to develop basic exercises for heightening the student's sense perception. The exercises further attempt to

---

[1] "The Physiology of the Imagination," **Scientific American**, 199 (September, 1958), 135-146.

*See such works as **Freedom to Learn** by Carl Rogers (Columbus, Ohio: C.E. Merrill, 1969), **Motivation and Personality** by Abraham Maslow (New York: Harper, 1954), **The Feast of Fools** by Harvey Cox (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, 1969), **Fantasy and Feeling in Education** by Richard M. Jones (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1968) and **Literature as Exploration** by Louise Rosenblatt (New York: Noble and Noble, 1938).

suggest connections between the student's increased sensitivity and the literary worlds encountered, in the belief that sensory attunement leads directly in increased intellectual and emotional responsiveness to literature.

The sensory approach to literature seeks to expose a student to literary experience by placing him/her inside the world of the poem—either as an oral interpreter or a silent reader—and thus permitting the student to share experience in accordance with the sensory parameters of the literature. Participation in creative exercises engages students in thought processes similar to those of literary authors. For example, when inventing dragons, dungeons, or space odysseys, students are engaging in a kind of poetic creativity. Once a student has felt literature in this way, he/she should be able to experience the poem as an organic process—a process so vital that it promises to shape the nature of his/her future literary responses and to increase proclivity for reading.

Exercises offered below are sense-oriented and interpersonal in nature. They emphasize personal experience; they stress the development of positive characteristics inherent in all human beings—creativity, imagination, sensory attunement; they encourage the personal risk-taking involved in fostering these attributes in an interpersonal climate. By working from sensory responsiveness to imaginative creation, the exercises help the student to become more conscious of the power of his/her own imagination and the presence of the writer's imagination in literature.

The exercises are organized to reflect the universal progression, from the concrete to the abstract, in the development of sensory awareness. Initial attention is given to the **direct perception** of incoming sensory data. The next step in sensory awareness development is the **immediate imaginative re-creation** of incoming sense data. Once the "matching" process has occurred between real concrete experience and immediate re-creation, the student is ready to achieve an **imaginative synthesis** in which new sense data is created in the imagination by combining sense memory with imaginative extrapolation. Imaginative synthesis is the first step in the development of sensory awareness in which the original sensory stimulus is absent. For example, if a student were asked to walk barefoot through an imagined layer of butter a foot thick, he/she would first need to re-create, through sense memory, the tactility of butter. The next responsibility is to transfer that sense memory to his/her feet, since the tactility of butter is usually felt by the hands or mouth. Finally, the student must imaginatively extrapolate to create the thickness, pressure, and tactility of butter one foot thick. The result is a tactile, kinetic, kinesthetic synthesis. Once such a complex imaginative synthesis is made, the student is well prepared to apply synthesizing and imaging powers to the sensory stimuli contained in **literature**. Here abstract symbols (words) are re-converted into experience. His/her training has come full circle. From the initial development of simple sense perception leading to the imaginative re-creation of senses, the student is now able to translate abstract literary sense appeals back into direct concrete experience.

Transfer of the resultant heightened awareness to literary understanding is general; that is, any of these exercises will relate to many works of literature. Specific applications can, however, be made, such as the effects of darkness on visual perception in many of Conrad's stories, the effects of sound in many of Poe's works, or the visual variety of speckles in Hopkin's "Pied Beauty." Following each sense category of exercises is a brief list of works specifically utilizing that particular sense as a basis of its literary world. The implication, of course, is that participation in the exercises will contribute to the student's understanding of those sample works.

Many of the following exercises may be familiar, since such exercises have been used through the years in various contexts.* The particular exercises included in this guide have all been tested in Illinois high school English classrooms and have proven to be valuable teaching tools.** Although all the exercises are written for the student at junior high level or above, the activities are flexible enough to be used on the elementary level with minimal alterations.

SAMPLE EXERCISES

THREE-MINUTE CONCENTRATION (Basic to all Sense Channels)

Objectives:

A. To increase ability to concentrate and to narrow the attention range.
B. To open selective sense channels to incoming data.
C. To increase the amount of data perceived through a selected sense channel.

---

*See, for example, **Improvisation for the Theatre** by Viola Spolin (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1963).

**Since 1973, summer workshops for teachers at SIU, Carbondale, have attempted to develop methodologies for experiential approaches to literature (including sensory exercises, improvisational techniques, creative drama techniques, and Readers Theatre). Many of these teachers have successfully utilized these methodologies in their classrooms. Results have included increased reading on the part of students and enthusiasm for the study of literature which reaches beyond the classroom.

D. To increase the ability to distinguish between incoming data and subjective reactions to that data.

Materials:

None

Procedure:

1. Instruct the class to sit quietly and attempt to attend fully to one sense channel. For example, instruct class members to look at a single object or upon a very narrow range of space.

   Instructions:

   a. Examine the object carefully; do not look away.
   b. Look at the object objectively – attempt to see new aspects, gain new information about it.
   c. Look at the object subjectively – attempt to identify with it and then attend to your own reactions.

2. Carry out this exercise with the class for five successive days, devoting a day to each sense channel.

3. Ask class members to continue the exercise at home each day for the whole term.

4. Use concentration as a pathway to creative writing, if desired.
   Ask the class members to choose, individually, a sense channel and spend at least five minutes in examination of the objective data coming in. Then ask them to spend five minutes in subjective identification with the data. Now instruct class members to write either about the experience or about what resulted from the experience.
   This exercise may be carried out at home, or various stimulus sources may be provided by the teacher for an in-class exercise.

SENSE OF SIGHT

Title:
Sights in the Room (A Warm-up Exercise)

Objectives:

A. To increase simple powers of observation
B. To encourage fresh perception of geometric shapes
C. To stimulate sensitivity to various shades of color

Materials:
Pencil and paper for each student

Procedure:
Ask the students to:

1. Make a list of all the colors you can identify in the room (Time limit: 5 minutes)

2. Make a list of all the **circular** shapes (or substitute any other geometric shape) in the room. (Time limit: 5 minutes)

3. Identify, and list, as many shades of white as you can in the room. (Time limit: 5 minutes)

Title:
Hands

Objectives:

A. To encourage powers of observation
B. To combine visual intensity with the sense of touch

Materials:
A long box, or puppet stage, behind which several people can stand (without being seen) and through which they can extend their hands. (Alternative procedure: No materials)

Prodecure:

1. Ask everyone to remove jewelry from their hands.

2. Form pairs.

3. Ask students to study the backs and palms of each other's hands, in pairs. (Time limit: 15 minutes)

4. They should note many variations between their hands and their partner's hands.

5. Ask one member of each pair to step together behind the large box-wall and to extend their hands.

6. Each partner is to locate the hands that belong to his partner.

Alternative procedure:
Ask the students to:

1. Divide into groups of four or five.

2. Study the backs and palms of each other's hands.

3. Develop a system of classification for hands. (Time limit: 15 minutes)

4. Go around the room, classifying everybody's hands according to their system.

Title

Color Cues

Objectives:

A. To encourage response to unexpected, often nonliteral images.

B. To experience sensory and emotional values of colors.

C. To express sensory and emotional value of color through the medium of either painting or creative writing.

Materials:

1. Large art paper for watercolor drawings

2. Watercolor felt pens

3. Pen and paper for each participant

Procedure:

1. Make a list (with aid from the class) of colors derived from names of things, such as:

   Dandelion
   Buttercup
   Tangerine
   Sky
   Avocado
   Lilac
   Olive
   Snow

2. Make a list (with aid from the class) of objects in nature, such as:

   Lake
   Mountain
   Rain
   Breeze
   Tree
   Desert
   Storm
   Valley

3. Combine, randomly, words from the first list with those of the second, such as:

   Snow Desert
   Dandelion Rain
   Sky Valley
   Avocado Storm
   Tangerine Breeze

4. Encourage the students to consider the combinations impressionistically and sensorily, not literally.

5. Permit students to choose one or two images and to either:

   A. Paint an impressionistic landscape incorporating that image, or,
   B. Write a descriptive passage, using the synaesthetic phrase in context.

SENSE OF SIGHT: SUGGESTIONS FOR LITERATURE

"As I Would Wish You Birds" by John Ciardi
"Loveliest of Trees" by A. E. Housman
"The Scarlet Ibis" by James Hurst
"The Masque of the Red Death" by Edgar Allen Poe
"In Just—" by e. e. cummings
"The Creation" by James Weldon Johnson
"Chicago" by Carl Sandburg
"Silver" by Walter de la Mare
"Snake" by D. H. Lawrence
"Daffodils" By William Wordsworth
"Pied Beauty" by Gerard Manley Hopkins
"Dulce Et Decorum Est" by W. H. Auden
"Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter" by John Crowe Ransonm
"Grass" by Carl Sandburg
"Snake" by Theodore Roethke
"The Alchemist" by Ezra Pound
"The Eagle" by Alfred, Lord Tennyson
"The End of the World" by Archibald MacLeish
"Study of Two Pears" by Wallace Stevens
"A Separate Peace" by John Knowles
"Grapes of Wrath" by John Steinbeck
"Something Wicked This Way Comes" by Ray Bradbury

SENSE OF SOUND

Title:
The Sounds Around Us

Objectives:

A. To sensitize the student to the incoming data of sound
B. To enable the student to become more sharply aware of his/her reactions to direct sound stimuli
C. To call attention to the imaginative perception of sound

Materials:
Tape recorders enough for each four or five students. A tape for each recorder.

Procedures:

1. Begin by asking the students to place their hands over their ears to attempt to shut out all sound—to experience the absence of sound. Then with ears and eyes shut, instruct the class to attend to as many sounds as they can hear.

2. After a listening period, ask each student to make a list of all the sounds heard.

3. When finished, have the class discuss the quality and nature of the sounds heard. Note differences in sounds listed by different students. Discuss reactions to sounds, and the power of sound to stimulate feelings and pictures in the mind.

4. Divide the class into groups and give each group a tape recorder. Have them go into different locals and record a sound "experience" of not more than 10 minutes in length. (This can be carried out around the school or it could be an overnight assignment.) Ask each group to consider carefully the sequence of sounds that they record as to variety and order.

5. When the tapes are completed, ask the groups to exchange tapes so that each group listens to a tape created by another group. Listen with closed eyes, attending closely to the sounds themselves. Play the tape a second time and let the sounds stimulate responses, trigger memories, associations, etc.

6. The groups may then discuss reactions and share responses, both within the group and between groups.
   This exercise may also be used to lead into creative writing, improvisation or into a specific piece of literature.

Title:
Sound Painting

Objectives:

A. To let sound permeate the other senses, especially the visual and kinesthetic sense . . . a "hearing" of color and pattern, a "feeling" of shape and size.
B. To render internal reactions to sound visible

Materials:
paints, brushes, large pieces of paper (a roll of newsprint is good for this), and sound sources

The teacher should provide two or more distinctive sound sources (but usually not more than four). Music would be good for this exercise. The rhythms and textures of the various selections should be distinctive and different from one another. Provide a separate piece of paper for each sound.

Prodecure:

1. Divide the class into groups of four and give each group paints, four brushes and paper. Have students sitting on the floor if possible, with room for free movement.

2. Play each sound for five to ten minutes, allowing the class to paint in response to the sound. Then go on to the next sound stimulus without a break. The session should continue for the duration of all the different sound sources. Encourage the students to work inside themselves and not to communicate with each other. The student should "give himself up" to the sound and allow it to dictate color, shape and size of the painting. Movement should be as free as possible, impressionistic rather than attempt to "draw" something.

3. Take a break and then discuss the experience. Talk about feelings and attitudes in relation to the sounds. Compare different paintings to the same sounds and ask the students to attempt to explain what was happening to them.

4. As a variation, the class members may be asked to take their paintings, go off by themselves, and find a story or a poem in one of the paintings. They should write it. If these are shared with the class at a later time, students may enjoy guessing which of the paintings provided the stimulus for the written work.

Title:
Created Sound Poems

Objectives:

A. To enable the student to discover his/her own capacity to create sounds and to communicate with sound alone
B. To reinforce an understanding of the pwer of sound to stir the imagination and to communicate specific events
C. To facilitate cooperative work in groups

Materials:
Any sound source that may be available, or the teacher may bring together a number of potential sound sources, such as wood blocks, whistles, drums, sandpaper, etc.

Procedure:

1. Warm-up: Instruct the class to experiment in making vocalized sounds of different kinds. Then as a whole, have the class try to imitate specific sounds, find new sounds, and experiment with making mechanical sounds with things in the environment. Concentrate on quality rather than volume.

2. Divide the class into groups. Each group is to create a story to be communicated by sound alone. It may have an explicit plot line, or may be a collection of sounds building to a climax from which the listeners may build their own plots.

3. When the sound poems have been created (groups may work overnight, or if possible, send them to different locations to work), ask the class to sit facing a wall, preferably in dim light. Sit and simply listen for a few minutes. Then have each group, in turn, present its sound poem from behind the class. Present all of the poems before discussion.

4. A variation of this exercise is to ask each group to take a short story or poem with strong sound images and attempt to re-create the story or an aspect of it in sound alone. Thus the sounds come from, or are suggested by, the literary work.

Title:
Exercise in Sound Imagery

Objectives:

A. To enable the student to experience the relationship between actual sound and figurative sound imagery.
B. To enable the student to understand more fully the process by which sound images are created.

Materials:
Unusual sounds. Literature built on strong sound images.

Procedure:

1. Begin with some sounds that are not easily recognizable. Ask students to close their eyes. Produce one sound, and as they listen, ask them to write a series of words which might approximate the sound. Then ask students to create a simili or metaphor for the sound, in words, which uses another sense channel; i.e., something seen, something tasted, something touched. Continue this process with other sounds.

2. After all sounds have had metaphors created from them on paper, compare the words used and the images created, sound by sound. Discuss the process of creating images—why particular objects or scenes were evoked. Note similarities and differences in words and images for the same sound. Discuss these.

3. Take a piece of literature built on strong sound images (figures). Isolate some of the images and have the students attempt to re-create, either individually or in groups, the original sounds. If the sounds are not described explicitly in the imagery, ask the students to "fill in the blanks," to create a specific sound which might have been the original sound heard in the imagination of the author.

SENSE OF SOUND: SUGGESTIONS FOR LITERATURE

"The Listeners" by Walter de la Mare
"Footfalls" by Wilbur Daniel Steele
"The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allen Poe
"The Congo" by Vachel Lindsay
"The Bells" by Edgar Allen Poe
"Silence" by Edgar Lee Masters
"I Heard a Fly Buzz When I Died" by Emily Dickinson
"Jazz Fantasia" by Carl Sandburg
"The Sounds of Silence" by Simon and Garfunkel

SENSES OF SMELL AND TASTE

Title:
Lunch Hour

Objectives:

A. To stimulate gustatory and olfactory sensitivity to everyday smells and tastes
B. To encourage the student to describe verbally various gustatory and olfactory appeals.

Materials:
None, except a school lunch hour with each student eating his/her own lunch.

Procedure:

1. As the class breaks for lunch, ask each student to be aware of all the smells and tastes he/she encounters.

2. In following discussion, ask students to describe verbally what the various smells and tastes made them feel or think of.

Title:
Table of Smells

Objectives:

A. To stimulate olfactory responsiveness to uncommon stimuli
B. To verbally describe the olfactory properties of unidentified items

Materials:

1. Two tables, out of view from each other.

2. Blindfolds for half the class.

3. Unusual objects without easily recognizable smells (provided by the class).

Procedure:

1. Split the class into two groups, A and B

2. Designate a table for Group A and a table for Group B, without permitting the opposite group to look at the other's table.

3. Place objects on the table, ascertaining that smells are not duplicated on the two tables.

4. Pair the class off, each pair containing one Group A member and one Group B member.

5. Each pair takes turns blindfolding one of themselves while the other brings objects from his/her table for the blindfolded member to smell.

6. After four or five smells, the other person wears the blindfold, and his/her partner brings objects to smell from the other table.

7. The two people then sit down and discuss what happened: what they thought the smells were, what associations were made, which smells were pleasant or unpleasant, etc.

Title:
Written Description of Smells

Objectives:

A. To imaginatively reexperience common olfactory stimuli
B. To express, in creative writing, the sensory reactions felt

Materials:
Pencil and paper for each student

Procedure:

1. Write the following questions on the blackboard:

   Can you describe the odor of gasoline?
   Can you describe the odor of freshly cut grass?
   Is there a particular odor in the air before a rainfall?
   Describe it.
   Is there a particular odor in the air after a rainfall?
   Describe it.
   Describe the smell of coffee.

2. Ask each student to pick two or more of the above questions, and to write the descriptions in good creative prose.

Title:
Taste and Tell

Objectives:

A. To stretch the sensory imagination to incorporate uncommon stimuli
B. To experience tactility gustatorily through imaginative synthesis
C. To share that experience through nonverbal kinetic and kinesthetic communication

Materials:
Pencil and paper for each student.

Procedure:

1. Divide the class into pairs.

2. Write on the board:

   What does it feel like to taste:

   1. Shag carpeting
   2. Sand
   3. Sandpaper
   4. Auto grease
   5. Feathers

3. Ask each student to describe each sensation to his/her partner by nonverbal kinetic and kinesthetic means: i.e. by moving and gesturing according to the way the imagined taste feels.

4. Ask partners to switch, as soon as one student has completed his/her nonverbal "explanations," so that the second partner can also "explain" his/her sensations.

SENSES OF SMELL AND TASTE: SUGGESTIONS FOR LITERATURE

As I Lay Dying by William Faulkner
"Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle" by Stephen Dunning
The Third Ingredient By O. Henry
Dissertation Upon Roast Pig by Charles Lamb
"The Eve of St. Agnes" by John Keats
Dandelion Wine by Ray Bradbury
"In Watermelon Sugar" by Richard Brautigan
The Grapes of Wrath by John Steinbeck (selected passages)
"After Apple Picking" by Robert Frost
A Christmas Memory by Truman Capote
"This is Just to Say" by William Carlos Williams
"Lovers of the Poor" by Gwendolyn Brooks
"A Dish of Peaches in Russia" by Wallace Stevens
The Jungle by Upton Sinclair
"Root Cellar" by Theodore Roethke

SENSE OF TOUCH

Title:
A Touch Collage

Objectives:

A. To sensitize the student to incoming tactile and thermal data
B. To enable the student to become more aware of his/her reactions to touch

Materials:
Objects brought in by the students.

Procedure:

1. On the preceding day ask each class member to bring in an object (concealed in a paper bag) which he/she feels will be a touch experience.

2. Divide the class into two groups. Group A will set up their objects on a table in one part of the room. Group B will set up in another part of the room.

3. Pair off members of group A with members of group B. Group A member is blindfolded and led through the experiencing by touch of all of the objects on the table set up by Group B. Next, the group B member is blindfolded and led through the touching of objects brought by group A.

4. Discuss associations made from the objects touched. Note our dependence upon visual stimuli for interpretation of the world.

5. As an alternate or prelude to this exercise, students with their objects still in bags are paired together. Student A is either blindfolded, or is handed the object behind his/her back (the object brought by B). After A has examined the object with his/her hands, he/she attempts to draw it. The sequence is then repeated with student B receiving the object and drawing it. When finished, compare drawings with original objects.

6. As another variation of this exercise, students, in groups, are asked to design a more elaborate touch experience for their classmates. When each design has been "experienced" by the class, discussions should center upon the nature and quality of touch itself, upon internal re-actions to touch stimuli, and upon associations evoked by touch stimuli.

Title:
The Re-creation of Touch Sensation

Objectives:

A. To enable the student to use sense memory to re-create the sense of touch and then respond to it

Materials:
Found Objects

Procedure:

1. Ask students to choose an object with a distinctive texture: a piece of cloth, a snap or button, etc. Have them close their eyes and examine the object with their fingers, then take their fingers away from the object and attempt to re-create the touch sensation from memory (in the fingers). If unable to do so, they should go back to the original stimulus and try again. (This exercise may be used with any of the sense channels.)

Title:
The Imagination of Touch

Objective:

A. To enable the student to synthesize in his/her imagination tactile experiences which may not have been previously experienced.

Materials:
None

Procedure:

1. Sitting, ask students to close their eyes and simply be aware of their bodies and the way in which their bodies contact solid objects around them. Note the differences between contact with a solid object and contact with space.

2. Standing, ask students with eyes closed, to explore the relationship of their bodies to the space around them. Keep exploring until the space begins to take on a texture. Rub against it. Feel the texture. Discuss reactions.

3. With students standing, eyes closed, make the following suggestions and ask them to react accordingly. In each case, stop and discuss reactions.

   a. You are enclosed in a cylinder which gives you very little room to move. On the inside it is coated with (insequence):

      sand----sticky glue----whipped cream----grease

b. The cylinder is filled with cobwebs; now with jello

c. Now the plain glass cylinder has contracted, making you stand straight and tall and thin. It is tight.

1) break the glass–but when you do, you discover you are in another cylinder–larger.

2) explore this larger cylinder. Find out how large it is. Decide whether or not you want to break out. Maybe you want to stay inside. But if you want to get out, decide how to do it–and do it.

d. You can add further imaginative experiences to this at your discretion, such as walking barefoot in twelve inches of butter, etc.

4. Based upon the previous exercises, ask the students to create images in words describing the touch experiences they have had.

Title:
The Touch of Literature

Objective:

A. To enable the student to identify more completely with touch images in specific literary works.

Materials:
Literature with strong images of touch.

Procedure:

1. Use tactile and thermal sense imagery drawn from specific literary works as a basis for experiential exercises similar to the two previous exercises: such exercises may precede or follow the reading of the work.

2. For example, to lead into "To Build a Fire" by Jack London, images of cold (ice water, walking through snow), wet wool, etc., could be used as imaginative thermal and tactile stimuli.

THE SENSE OF TOUCH: SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR LITERATURE

"The Miracle Worker" by William Gibson
"Ode to My Socks" by Pablo Neruda
"Of Mice and Men" by John Steinbeck
"To Build a Fire" by Jack London
"The Old Man and the Sea" by Ernest Hemingway
"The Man with the Broken Fingers" by Carl Sandburg
"Hands" by Sherwood Anderson
"The Man who Lived Underground" by Richard Wright
"Patterns" by Amy Lowell
"The Life Guard" by James Dickey
"Moss Gathering" by Theodore Roethke (also other poems by Roethke)

THE KINESTHETIC SENSE

Title:
The Body in Motion

Objectives:

A. To sharpen the student's awareness of the feedback from his own muscles during movement
B. To increase awareness in the student of the movement potential of his/her body

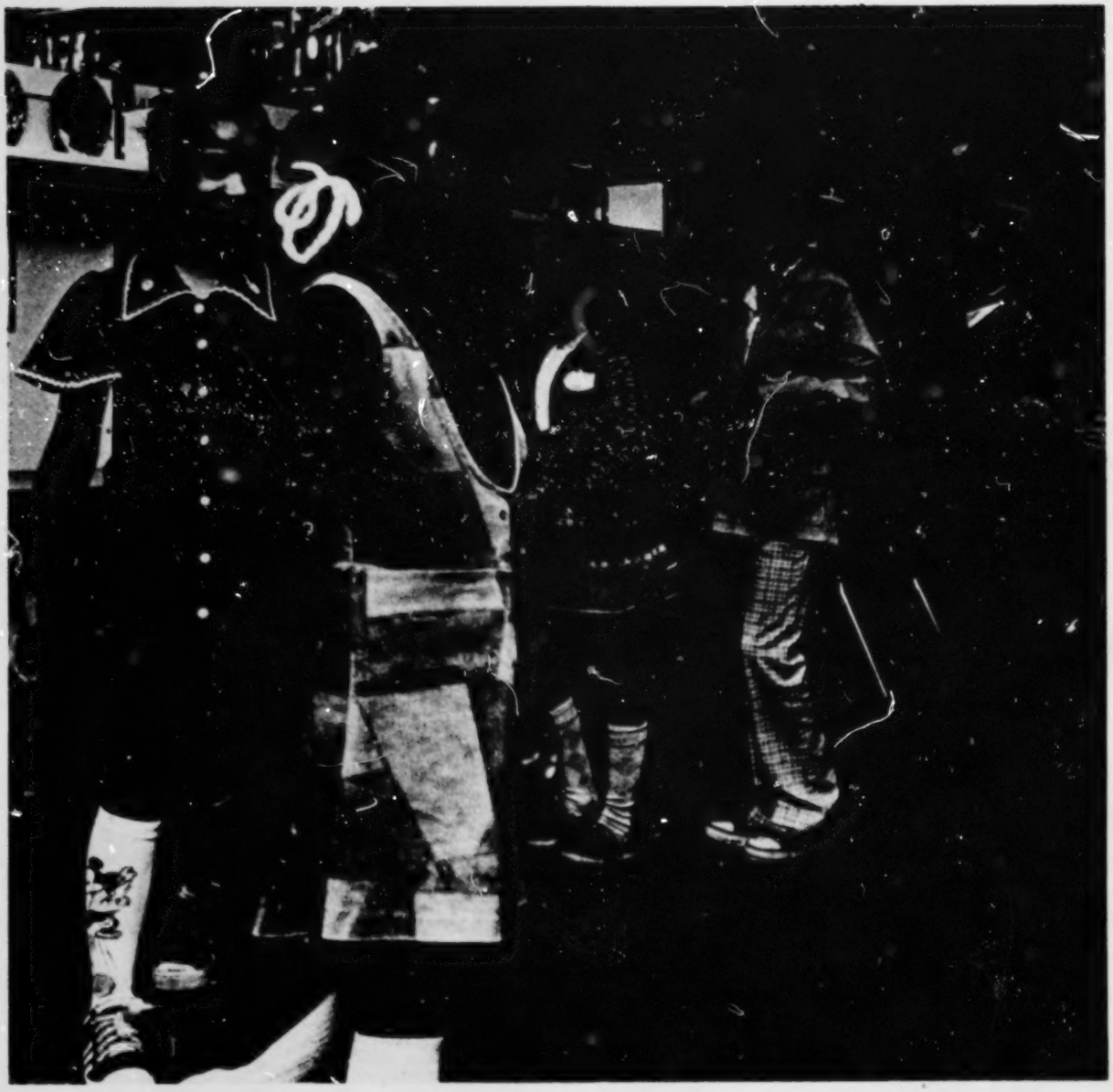
Materials:
These exercises are designed for a space in which there is room to move freely. However, if such is not available, many can be adapted for use standing in place or even seated. Ask students to wear something in which they will feel free to move.

Procedure:

1. Standing in place, ask students to move their bodies slowly. They should become aware of the body moving. Eyes should be closed. Instruct students to pull the body apart–arms from shoulders, neck from chest, chest from hips, legs from hips. Now reach for the ceiling, keeping heals on the floor. When students have reached their highest extension, tell them to collapse onto the floor or onto a chair.

2. Ask students to lie on the floor, or sit loosely in their chairs, and relax completely, eyes closed. Verbally help them to attend to each body part to see that it is relaxed (arms, hands, fingers, neck, etc.). When they are relaxed, instruct them to contract all of their muscles at once, roll up into a **tight** ball. Hold. Then go through the relaxation process again. Students have thus experienced the extremes of tension and relaxation of the voluntray muscles.

3. Discovery of individual parts of the body: Beginning with the head and face, ask students to experiment with movement of individual body parts. Make faces (stretch, twist, pull, make it wide, narrow, long, flat), move parts of the face. Move the head in various ways. Continue the exploration through the body parts, con-



cluding with feet and toes. Suggest to the students that they make their bodies talk.

4. Instruct students to choose one body part and explore the full extent of its movement possibilities. For this exercise (the first time) have them choose an arm or leg. Explore ways of moving: fast or slow, with great tension or little tension, swing or sharp, heavy or light. Explore directional aspects: up or down, curved or straight. Find ways to move that the body part has never moved before. Discuss feedback from the movement, how each kind of movement feels in the body.

5. Choose a way of moving the chosen body part and let that part then set the whole body into motion. Attend to the feedback of the total body movement.

Title:

Movement and Sound or The Kinesthetic Feel of Sound

Objectives:

A. To develop sharper awareness in the student of the relationship between sound and movement

B. To increase the student's awareness of the movement potential of individual words
C. To enable the student to make imaginative extensions from sound initiated movement

Materials:
Selected stimulus words.

Procedure:

1. Speaking together, ask the class to sound some of the consonant and vowel sounds (t, k, g, d, e, o, etc.). Discuss the quality of the sound. Attempt to capture the same quality in movement in the whole body, if room permits, or in a part of the body.

2. Choose some words describing movement of the body (wiggle, writhe, twist, spring, undulate, shuffle, flop, grab, squeeze, etc.). Ask the students to move their bodies in response to the word. The more total body involvement achieved, the better. Discuss the different feelings brought about by movement of the various words.

3. Choose movement words which are a little more abstracted from body movement (expand, contract, float, swoop, slither, whip, explode, melt, swirl, crumble, infiltrate, evaporate, etc.). Ask students to move in response to these. Here the movements should begin to become much more varied. Check to find very different movements for the same word. Discuss what the movements meant to the students, both in movement terms and in other associated terms. They may have accompanying visual or auditory images.

4. Divide the class into groups. Give each group three or four words which connote strong and full movement, but of very different kinds. For example: swoop, mince, strike, undulate. Ask the group to work with the words in one or more of the following ways:

   a. Each group member may take one of the words and explore its movement potential. Then let the movement suggest a character—a kind of person who would move in this manner. When the characters are discovered, the group may go on to place them in a plot, or situation, if so desired.

   b. The group as a whole is to experiment with each word, then make up a movement phrase using all four kinds of movement at least once. When this is completed, the group should explore the result to see what kind of action it might suggest (human action, mechanical action, etc.). Is there a possible plot line beginning to develop?

   c. Groups may also choose their own movement words and explore them. This exercise may be carried out individually, if students seem to be adept at movement and unafraid to explore by themselves.

Title:
Movement in Literature

Objectives:

A. To develop in the student a stronger awareness of the existence of movement images in literature.
B. To increase the student's awareness of the movement potential of literary images.

Materials:
Literary selections containing strong movement imagery.

Procedure:

1. Ask students to explore a given literary selection for movement images.

2. Select some of the images to explore in movement, as in the preceding exercise. Explore for sound quality in movement. Explore for literal movement connotations. Movement exploration may be abstract, attempting to catch feelings and attitudes, or may be more literal and pantomimic, attempting to catch specific action.

3. Discuss the movement experiences in terms of the literary work from which they came. How does the understanding of the movement potential of the images enhance understanding of the total work?

THE KINESTHETIC SENSE: SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR LITERATURE

"The Old Man and the Sea" by Ernest Hemingway
Moby Dick by Herman Melville (especially the last four chapters)
"Tarantella" by Hilarire Belloc
"God's Grandeur" by Gerald Manley Hopkins
"Wild Grapes" by Robert Frost
"The Fastest Kid on 52nd Street" by James Farrell
Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka

The works of the following poets are strong in movement imagery:

James Dickey, poems such as "Falling"
Theodore Roethke, poems such as "Big Wind," "Child on Top of a Greenhouse," and "My Papa's Waltz"
e.e. cummings, poems such as "loneliness," and "In Just—"

A SYNAESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

Title:

Potato Day (An all-day experience, or a class project of several days.)

Objectives:

A. To experience a full sensory relationship with an object
B. To increase powers of observation for identification
C. To enter dramatically and sensorily into an inanimate character
D. To move freely and expressively in pantomime
E. To share literature orally with others

Materials:

1. Each student needs to bring one potato to class

2. Literature to have on hand (enough copies for each student):

   The "Yam section" from **The Invisible Man** by Ralph Ellison
   "Spraying the Potatoes" and "A Chrismas Childhood" by Patrick Kavanagh
   "The Potatoes' Dance" by Vachel Lindsay
   "Potato" by Richard Wilbur
   "Vegetable Fantasies" by Helen Underwood Hoyt
   "Potatoes" by Edward Verrall Lucas
   "The Proud Vegetables" by Mary McNeil Fenollosa

3. Painting: "The Potato Eaters"

4. Pencil and paper for each student

5. Wire, toothpicks, pins for making potato men

6. Potato salad (optional)

Procedure:

A. Getting to Know Your Potato

1. Ask each student to concentrate on establishing a complete sensory bond with his potato—except biting into it.

2. Encourage the students to close their eyes, and try to get to know their potatoes through touch.

3. Ask all the students to sit in a large circle.

4. Everyone places his potato in the center of the circle, and then closes his eyes.

5. The instructor passes out the potatoes again, making sure no one gets his own.

6. Class members in the circle pass potatoes around until each finds his own. All the students still have their eyes closed.

7. When a student finds his own potato, he should lay it aside, but continue to pass potatoes until each student recovers his potato.

8. Ask the students to open their eyes, and to make sure that they each have their own potato.

B. Movement and the Potato

Potato Ball:

1. Ask the students to break into groups of two to four, and to perform the following actions.

2. Toss potatoes back and forth.

3. Try to juggle two potatoes, if possible.

4. Attempt to anticipate when you think a group member is **about** to throw his potato at you.

"The Potatoes' Dance" by Vachel Lindsay:

1. Read the poem to the class.

2. Read the poem again, as a stimulus for movement improvisations. (Potato music here is very effective, if available.)

Potato Pantomimes

In groups of two, ask the students to work out one of the following pantomime problems:

1. Be a potato or another vegetable and show how you came into being. Give life from seed to consumption. Use sounds, but not words.

2. Be potatoes or other specific vegetables. Create a human situation in which you (the vegetables) have to act and react as vegetables.

3. Create a pantomime in which you, as a human, interact with your partner, as a vegetable.

4. Create a pantomime in which you and your partner, as humans, interact with vegetables.

C. A Creative Dramatics Experience: Potato Salad

1. Assign each person a "part" to play as an ingredient of potato salad: potatoes, eggs, onions, pickles, celery, paprika, salt, pepper, mayonnaise, etc. More than one person can play each "part."

2. Announce that we are going to make potato salad.

3. Ask each ingredient to become prepared for mixing into the salad:

   Potatoes and eggs must each be cooked and chopped.
   Onions, pickles, and celery must be chopped fine.
   Paprika, salt, and pepper must be ground and/or shaken.
   Mayonnaise must be shaken up and mixed with the salad.

4. Have every ingredient mix into a giant (imaginary) mixing bowl and "be stirred up."

5. Serve real potato salad to all the class (optional).

6. Discussion following the exercise could concentrate on:

   a. Freedom of imaginative body expression
   b. Sensory dimensions of the exercise
   c. How much characterization was accomplished
   d. The dimensions of improvisation in the exercise

D. Potato Metaphors

1. Ask each student to take his potato and examine it again.

2. Have each student close his eyes and use his other senses to reexamine his potato.

3. Hand out pencils and paper to each student.

4. Divide the class into three groups.

5. Group 1:

   Write metaphoric descriptions of your potato, based on all the senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, smell, kinesthetic, kinetic.

The Authors

Dr. Marion Kleinau is a Professor of Speech at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. She teaches Oral Interpretation and has published articles in many professional speech journals. She is active in many speech and English professional organizations and has developed research grants for HEW and National Endowment for the Humanities.

Dr. Janet Larsen McHughes is an Assistant Professor of Oral Interpretation and Creative Drama at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. She has published articles in many professional speech journals. She has served on the Executive Board of the Illinois Speech and Theatre Association and has been editor of their journal. She is currently involved with team-teaching projects with the English Department.

TEACHING ORAL INTERPRETATION THROUGH CHORAL SPEAKING

NOTE: A viedeotape exemplifying concepts found in this article is available from the Illinois Office of Education (see Selected Resources for the address.)

Lillian Parks
and
Yvonne Marion

Choral Speaking is an activity which is enjoyed by groups of all ages. It may be defined as "the interpretation of a poem or prose selection by a trained choir." It is not just speaking together, but interpreting together by taking prose or poetry from the printed page and bringing it to life for the speakers, as well as the audience. By the blending of voices, the cueing of intonation, and the performance of overt expression, a chorally spoken selection can achieve the same effects as a well composed song. A group of speakers are led by a conductor or director who is interested in seeing that they develop the ability to bring out naturally the movement of the words, the meaning of the words, and the mood of the words.

Advantages of Choral Speaking

For several reasons, choral speaking is a valuable activity. It, first of all, has a unique way of building self-confidence in students. Where many students tend to shy away from individual performances, the fear of speaking is usually overcome when there is a group to give support. After a few selections chorally spoken, even the most timid student becomes confident enough to try duo or individual selections. As a matter of fact, choral speaking can be useful in bring-

ing out the more timid student with artistic expression being developed along the way.

Group participation allows the teacher to encourage clarity in speech and interest in speech self-improvement without calling attention to the sensitive child. The essentials of tone production and pronunciation are two areas, for example, which are emphasized in choral speaking.

Another advantage to choral speaking is that it gives the student a sense of responsibility. It helps the student to recognize that each part works to produce a whole, finished product. Without the cooperation of each student, this becomes a monumental task. Responsibilities range from being present and on time at rehearsals, to speaking effectively a specific part. No child likes to feel that he/she is not contributing to the whole. The student usually takes on the responsibilities cheerfully; sometimes to the point of demanding the same from other students in the group. Furthermore, choral speaking gives children practice in leadership by leading their classmates in group speaking, in announcing the selections of a program, or in interpreting materials to be used.

Another very worthwhile advantage to choral speaking, especially for nonstandard English speaking students, is the improvement of diction and grammar. Students become aware of the necessity of speaking distinctly. Many of these children tend to speak rapidly, thereby omitting sounds and/or words which gives an overall undesired effect of "muddled speech." Moreover, if many people are to speak together as one, there must be delicacy and precision of articulation, resonance, range and flexibility of tone. In respect to grammar, choral speaking does not serve to change speech habits, but does attune the students to more acceptable speech or standard English.

Summarily, choral speaking develops confidence in children unconsciously by:

1. improving speech through mass training
2. encouraging the timid
3. restraining the bold
4. developing leadership based on ability
5. developing the ability to speak and think with words
6. developing the imaginations and emotions

Finally, choral speaking offers a fascinating introduction to poetry. Poetry is meant to be read aloud and children take pleasure in listening to the varied interpretations of many types of literature.

Organizing the Chorus

For the group which has had no training in choral speaking, the director should first stress the importance of following directions. One method used is for the director to point to two spots——perhaps one on the hand and one on the elbow, naming one "tick" and the other "tock." He touches the spots in various rhythms, the alternates from "tick" to "tock" in no particular pattern until the students realize the importance of following directions.

Uniform costumes and stage sets may be used to enhance a verse-speaking program.

The number of members in the verse-speaking chorus may vary widely. There may be from 20 to 100 members. However, the most effective work can usually be done with a group of 20. The most effective work can be done, too, by choir members who know how to use their voices, who have an understanding of breath control, articulation, inflection, volume, melody, and rhythm. Further, the members of the group should be near the same level of literary appreciation and emotional expressiveness.

Selecting Materials

The director of a choral speaking group, especially for school-aged children, must take several factors into consideration after organizing the chorus. One of the most difficult tasks for beginning directors is the selection of material. It must be appropriate for a particular group, and in line with their interests. In selecting materials these critera seem to be most important:

1. strong compelling rhythm

2. variation and contrast in mood

3. variation and contrast in thought.

Furthermore, in selecting materials, it is important to keep in mind the purpose. Onomatopoeia selections may be used to direct the student to use vocal pitch and inflections to communicate words which are imitations of the sounds of nature. Such selections include words like "boom," "hiss" or "groan." This type of selection demands that the student give specific interpretation. For example, when a student sees the word "BOOM" in a selection, he will almost increase voice volume, deepen pitch, and demonstrate excitement. The following is an example of an onomatopoeia selection for elementary school-aged students.

What Does the Hail Say?

What does the hail say?

"Knock! Knock!"

What does the rain say?

"Pit! Pat!"

What does the sleet say?

"Sh! Sh!"

What does the wind say?

"Whoo! Whoo!"

—Author Unknown

Everyone enjoys humor and a well performed humorous choral speaking selection can be a delight for all involved. One of the most talented writers in this area for elementary school-aged students is Joel Matus. He often writes on subjects about which students can identify. An example is an excerpt from one of his selections.

"The Cafeteria"

Grab A tray
Stand in line
Eat some food,
And feel real fine!
Grab a tray
Hold your nose
Cause what you smell,
Will curl your toes.
Don't take all day
Come on you guy
Get out of my way!
LUNCH TIME!

The director must be careful in choosing humorous selections. If it is too subtle or out of the group's realm of experience, the point may be missed. One of the most difficult tasks to undertake is to teach humor when it isn't apparent.

Antiphonal or alternated speaking is a good method for the beginning choral group where high and low voices work separately. In this type of selection, the high voices may give the first part of a parallel, and the low voices give the second part. It is best to start with antiphonal selections rather than unison work. The latter is the most difficult type of choral speaking to do well, although it is often attempted by the inexperienced director when class performance as a choral group is desired. It should not be attempted until the group has sufficient experience to speak "as one voice." Psalm 150 demonstrates parallels of high and low voices for an effective antiphonal selection.

PSALM 150

(ALL)

Praise ye the Lord,
(Light voices)
Praise God in his sanctuary:
(Low voices)
Praise him in the firmament of his power.
(Light voices)
Praise him for his mighty acts:
(Low voices)
Praise him according to his excellent greatness.
(Light voices)
Praise him with the sound of the trumpet;
(Low voices)
Praise him with the psaltery and harp.
(Light voices)
Praise him with the timbrel and dance:
(Low voices)
Praise him with stringed instruments and organs.
(Light voices)
Praise him upon the loud cymbals:
(Low voices)
Praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.
(ALL)
Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.
Praise ye the Lord.

The materials chosen for the first few lessons should not be difficult; they should be simple in pattern, theme, and story. Begin with antiphonal, or two-part, selections, in which one group asks a question or states the first part of a parallel and a second group answers a question or states the second part of a parallel. Selections from the Bible may be used for this type of reading. Next may come ballads with refrains, for ballads contain human-interest stories and marked melodies. Chants and marching songs may be tried next, for they help to unify the choir. Lyrics with universal appeal should follow. Dramatic poetry should be studied last. The dramatic poetry in Shakespeare's plays and in Greek tragedies may be used in advanced verse-speaking groups. Poems having musical patterns in sounds, like "Eldorado" by Edgar Allan Poe, are good selections. Blank verse, free verse, and prose rhythms will furnish a vast field of material for groups which are ready to attempt more difficult verse-speaking.

Interpreting Materials

The next step is method of preparation. After many attempts with choral speaking, each director invariably develops his/her own method of preparation. Even considering individual differences, this preparation usually entails these steps. First the teacher and students discuss the selection in order to give the students an overall view or synopsis of it to facilitate its interpretation and understanding. Next, the director may either read the selection aloud or have the students read aloud along with him/her, line by line, or section by section. Rhythm and expression are developed here and are continued until the desired interpretation is reached. There is a good reason for gathering suggestions for interpretation. Although a beginning choral speaking group develops technique by means of imitation, the director must as soon as possible let the students take over lest the results be a slavish imitation of her/his own speech, voice, and manner of expression. This is an especially real problem when the director has a strong personality. The director must do all she/he can to prevent undue imposition of her/his own ideas upon the students.

In addition, to interpret poetry well, the choral-speaking group must know something of these qualities of poetry: meter, rhythm, and melody. Poetry has pace and melody. Poetry has timed beats, called meter, which are a fixed pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables. It has rhythm, which is based on longer-patterned movements like those in dancing, marching, running, riding, or swimming. These rhythms are in the lines of the poems. Poetry also has melody, which is the expression of the idea or the spirit of the selection in a succession of speech notes.

All the verse-speaking choir needs to know about meter is that there are strong beats at regular intervals and that the beats can be sounded out.

The conductor should find out which members of the choir can beat out the meter of lines and which cannot. Those who can should test out and mark all the poems that are to be used. If poems with irregular beats are to be used, they should be tested out and marked also. It is better, however, for the beginning choir to use only poems with a regular meter, for they are much easier.

Rhythm is always present in your life. The beauty of poetry lies in its rhythm.

The study of nonsense verse and rhymes will help the choir to develop a sense of rhythm. After the stresses of the correct rhythms of a selection have been worked out, it helps to clap, tap, or beat out the rhythms while practicing.

Suggestions for the Conductor

All aspects considered, and there are more than most inexpreienced directors realize, here are some suggestions for the director.

Directing should be arranged so that attention is not drawn to the director. This may require the teacher to direct from the back of the room or to remain seated in a place that is not obtrusive.

Children who direct must be able to follow the basic principles of leading. Children should direct in a

position that will not detract from the interpretation of the selection.

Hand movements of the director should aid the choir, but not serve as a distraction.

The director's voice should never overshadow the interpretation of the choir. There may be a blending of the director's voice as needed within the choir.

The choir should be alert and attentive at all times. The director should strive for unity of thought, feeling, articulation, pitch and inflection.

Difficulties and Danger

One of the most difficult and debatable points concerning choral speaking to interpret is "should speaking choirs be conducted?" The general opinion is that the conductor should do nothing to disturb the concentration of the audience. But where should he/she be? Some views on the subject suggest four possible positions:

1. standing at the corner of the platform (the most difficult to command entire group).
2. standing below platform if there is a stage.
3. standing in the rear of the room behind view of audience.
4. sitting in the audience.

It seems that if a group needs a conductor to signal parts or give facial cues for expression, the group usually needs added practice. There must be enough autonomy and responsibility developed into each member of the choral-speaking group that during performance, a conductor need only signal its start unless there is a "lead" student. This may become a monumental task for the conductor of elementary school-aged children.

Many conductors have run across obstacles that tend to be ever present when teaching any selection. The most often seen are the dangers of:

1. dullness
2. "singing" the words
3. heavy, laboured utterance

Dullness occurs when a group speaks every poem in exactly the same way giving no attention to pitch, mood, etc. This usually occurs when there has been too much drilling on memorization and not enough interpretive skills.

It is easy to fall into the habit of "singing" the words when many voices are concerned. The group must be reminded that is is not an orchestra. Again, concentration on conveying "meaning," not just "words," would help to alleviate this problem.

Because there is a group of voices does not mean there must be loudness. The students must be reminded that "loudness" does not mean "effectiveness." One of the chief aims is that of a light flexible tone of speech. Because the group strives to speak as "one," the ability to sound light and flexible as one, even with 50, is important. Also in speaking lightly, the group must strive for definite articulation.

Things to Avoid

It is quite as important, also to observe the following precautions:

1. Avoid cheap, elocutionary materials.
2. Avoid material beyond the pupils' powers of appreciation and enjoyment.
3. Let the directing be as inconspicuous as possible. Great directing consists in bringing out the latent possibilities of the choir and guiding those abilities toward a satisfying end. Often it is possible to turn the choir over to a student leader without distrubing either the security or the artistry of the choir.
4. Avoid sing-song patterns and broken thoughts which result in jerky grouping or phrasing.
5. Avoid emphasizing tone volume at the expense of good tone quality.
6. Avoid choosing "star" pupils for all solo parts. Such pupils need the training least, and leadership is frequently developed by giving the average child ample opportunity to grow.
7. Avoid using the choir simply as a "snow" device. If it becomes merely exhibitionary in its aim, it has no place in a democratic educational program.
8. Avoid mechanical direction which results in mechanical interpretation, clipped vowels, over-long pauses, and stilted speech.

Although choral speaking has its disadvantages, the advantages and joys far outweigh the difficulties The educational and entertainment values are well worth the efforts in bringing about a real appreciation of poetry and language.

Suggested Sequence For Choral Speaking With Suggested Materials

The Refrain. A simple type of response in which the group comes in as a whole on the repeated line or lines in each verse.

"The Wind," Robert Louis Stevenson
"The Little Half Chick," Spanish Folklore
"A Farmer Went Trotting," Mother Goose
"The Circus Is Coming to Town," Louis Abney
"In Come de Animals," Floklore Rhyme
"Molly Malone," Author Unknown

Two-Part Choral Reading. Lyric poems lend themselves to this type of grouping. Its purpose is to provide contrasts, parallels, or characterizations.

"Who Has Seen the Wind?" Christina G. Rosetti
"Hiding," Dorothy Aldis
"Where Go the Boats?" Robert Louis Stevenson
"I Saw a Ship," Unknown
"Where Are You Going, My Pretty Maid," Mother Goose

Sequence Work. Details are built up to a conclusion or many details of a theme are presented. Individuals or small groups each add a detail or an image to the total idea.

"Someone," Walter de la Mare
"Black and Gold," Nancy Byrd Turner
"Autumn Francies," Unknown
"Mice," Rose Fyleman
"Wynken, Blynken, and Nod," Eugene Field

Cumulative Work. This is the most difficult type of choral grouping. It involves, more than the other forms, the use of voice quality to achieve an interpretative effect. Individual voices, or groups of similar voices, are combined one after another to achieve a cumulative effect. The purpose is not simply to add greater volume, but to build a more significant climax.

"The Owl and the Pussy Cat," Edward Lear
"The Potatoes' Dance," Vachel Lindsay
"The Creation," James Weldon Johnson
"The Mysterious Cat," Vachel Lindsay

Unison Work. This is the most difficult type of choral speaking to do well, although it is the form most often used by inexperienced directors when they wish their class to perform as a choral group. It should not be attempted until the choir has had sufficient experience to speak "as one voice." For elementary school children, it is best to limit unison speaking to short poems. Perhaps the greatest danger in unison speaking of poems is to give them in a sing-song fashion.

"Catkin," Unknown
"Rain," Robert Louis Stevenson
"Fog," Carl Sandburg

Suggested Selections According To Purpose

Humorous

"David Jazz"*
"Old King Cole"*
"My First Cigar"
"The Substitute Teacher" by Jackie Ball
"The Principal's Office" by Jackie Ball
"Noah's Ark" by Bill Cosby
"There is Nothing Lake a Dame"*
"Sister Suffragettes"*
"Anything You Can Do"

Onomatopoeia — Selections for "Sound"

"The Congo" by Vachel Lindsay
"Boats" by Rudyard Kipling
"Finger Poppin"*

Serious

"What Color is God's Skin?"
"What Shall I Tell My Children?"*
"If" – Rudyard Kipling
"Bishop Hatto"
"The Creation" by James W. Johnson
"Its All Right to Cry" by Marlo Thomas
"The Bunkshooters" by Carl Sandburg
"Love Your Enemy"*
"Battle Hymn of the Republic"
"And No One Asked"*
"Beat! Beat! Drums!" by Walt Whitman
"The Music Makers" by A. W. Shaughnessey
"John Brown's Body" by Stephen Vincent Benet
"Invocation" by Stephen Vincent Benet

*These selections are available from:

Project Speak
1005 State Street
East St. Louis, Illinois 62207

Records

Although there are several choral speaking records on the market, the ones most highly recommended are the series by Carrie Rosmussen entitled: "Let's Say Poetry Together" (Primary, Intermediate and Upper Grades), Activity Records, Freeport, New York.

Books

Abney, Louise, **Choral Speaking Arrangements for the Junior High.** Boston: Expression Co., 1967.

DeWit, Marguerite, **Dramaticules for Choric Recilation with Group Movement.** Boston: Expression Co., 1946. (Collection of dramatic verse and prose)

Gullan, Marjorie, **Choral Speaking.** Boston: Expression Co., 1961.

Hedde, Wilhelmenia, **The New American Speech.** New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1963.

Keefe, Mildred Jones, **Choric Interludes.** Boston: Expression Co., 1959. (Collection of verse.)

Talhoff, Albert. **Totenmal.** Boston: Expression Co., 1954. (Dramatic Choral.)

The Authors

Mrs. Lillian A. Parks is Director of Project Speak, a Title I Language Program, in the East St. Louis Public Schools, K-9. She taught on all grade levels and at the community college level before coming to Project Speak. She serves as a consultant for professional organizations, universities and community groups.

Mrs. Yvonne Johnson Marion is a language teacher with Project Speak in East St. Louis, teaching K-6 at Monroe School. Her background is in Speech therapy.

THE DRAMATIC DIMENSION—PLAYS AND ORAL INTERPRETATION

Ralph R. Lane
and
Jack C. Rang

The probabilities are that most teachers of English make some use of oral reading in the presentation of the units on drama. Unfortunately, too often such reading is, at best, uninspired mouthings of the vibrant and vital lines of the script. Perhaps, rather than simply to leap into such reading, your students might become more interested in drama if they saw the immediate relationship between the people of the play and the people of the world in which the students live.

The beginning point for any such identification is to involve the students in observations of their world. The objectives of the first assignment might be described as:

1. to increase students' awareness of the essentially dramatic characters in the world around them;
2. to observe the relationship between the work people do and the costumes selected or required for that work.

The procedure for carrying out the assignment is a simple one. Students are told to observe at least three people **outside of school** whose work involves special clothing of some sort. The "special clothing" might be a uniform for a nurse, a police officer, or a soldier, or it might be a farmer's winter coveralls, a butcher's apron, or a doctor's lab coat. When they come back to class, ask the students to describe both the costume and the function of the costume for one or more of the people they observed. They might be encouraged to write about the costume from the **costume's** point of view—as: how does a firefighter's helmet feel about its job? An alternate assignment might be to ask the students to describe, first with words and then with actions only—**no words**—how the costume limits the activity (or facilitates the activity) of the worker wearing it. Such activities might include how a welder's mask inhibits head movement, even when the mask is raised on its pivots, how a farmer's boots (their weight and shape and composition) affects the way the person walks; how the nail pockets in a carpenter's apron make his/her work easier and faster.

A progressive step from this assignment might be to have the students observe their own costumes and the way they choose them each day. This osbervation might get them into clothing/costume choices between winter and summer, between school and work clothes, between weekday and weekend apparel. They might then move from this personal awareness to observations about clothing worn by people outside of school.

In this assignment they would be asked to observe persons who wear no special apparel for their work or outside the place of employment. The objective here is to try to assign occupations or professions on the basis of how people move—physical activities that might be related to their work. For example, they might see that a restaurant waitress' or waiter's feet hurt, and, hence, she/he treats them tenderly, walking carefully and, perhaps, with difficulty after work.

Suggest that each class member keep a journal of what they have seen, where the person was, and all of the details the student saw. Now ask them to pantomime these people. Ask the class to identify the job or profession from the nonrelated activities which the job imposes.

From here you are ready to put two students, with their observed characters functioning, into an improvised scene. You might choose a firefighter and a dress-

maker, or a nurse and electrcian, or a farmer and a doctor. Let the students make up dialogue as they go along. The scene should not exceed three minutes in duration (unless things are really going well, as sometimes happens with these). The objective here is to teach the students that simple conversation between two people does not, in itself, create a dramatic situation. In fact, such conversations may well be boring, lasting less than a minute, since both people have run out of things to say. This is a direct way to lead into a discussion of dramatic structure and the need for a related continuity of developing action or conflict in the dramatic event.*

Once this point is made clear, the class becomes aware of the need to **plan out** the dialogue or situation in advance. Let some of them (preferably **all** of them) try their scenes again, this time being aware of a need for some sort of conflict. Remember that the action need not be a **big** one. It can be as simple as, say, the firefighter in our example above trying to convince the dressmaker that the dressmaker is in danger, while she/he assures the firefighter that she/he will not leave the sewing machine until the hem in the wedding gown is completed. Pointing out that drama is essentially active, you might suggest that the resolution of the scene could come as the firefighter simply picks up the dressmaker and climbs down the ladder with the dressmaker still clutching at the sewing.

Here, in brief, we have illustrated what students may expect to find as they become involved in the dramatic event that is a play. They have discovered that costume is not reserved for the theatre alone—in fact, that they, themselves, **costume** every day, whether it is in the uniform of blue jeans, as is currently the "uniform" of the day, or in the clothing they choose for whatever work or sports activity they engage in. They have also discovered that drama **is** like their own lives in that conversation with conflict without resolving action is as pointless on the stage as it is in the class, in the lunch room, or at home. They have learned the validity of Aristotle's definition of drama as the presentation of humans in action, though they are not yet aware of what they know.

Let us suppose, now, that your curriculum guide says that you will teach **Romeo and Juliet** to your freshman class this year. How can you transfer what your class has done in the exercise-projects above to Verona and the "starcros'd lovers" of that play? Your students' observations begin in their own circle of frinds. Juliet is fourteen and Romeo no more than eighteen in the play. So—how does a fourteen-year-old girl act when she is in love? What does she **say** about the way she is in love? How does she move when she is around people who might oppose or stop her love? How does she behave when she is with "the guy"? When your class brings back these observations they might tend to over-draw their observations, since they will be a bit nervous about sentiments and ages so close to their own. Keep urging them to show **honest** reactions rather than stereotyped "funny," TV sit-com "types." Then try the same observations on eighteen-year-old males. Move on to parents when they talk about love and when they talk about people they hate, or, at least, people they don't like.

True, this is a longer-than-usual preparation time to read the play. The difference is that now students are ready to see the people of the play as **people they know**.

There is no need to try to **actualize** the play with costumes or setting; your readings of the play will now concentrate on the literature itself. When you assign parts to individuals to read aloud "in scene" in class the students now have a standard by which to evaluate the sounds of the script. Any time we can concentrate on the literature we can **heighten** the reader's involvement in it.

The basic functions of reading a play aloud are two-fold. First, most plays are written to be acted, and acting, to many people, means something that is "put on"—something artificial. Productions of plays, fully staged performances, often fail because the director, too, has forgotten that it is the **text** that creates the play, and not the scenery, the costumes—the **spectacle**. It is the words of the text that really develop the conflict of the play, not some applied or imposed stage "business" or activity. And the student who is involved in a **reading** performance of a play is freed from the concerns of "spectacle." He/she is not concerned with costumes and is very little concerned

*The author is indebted to Ms. Mina G. Halliday, Speech and Drama Consultant of the Illinois Office of Education, for this and many other valuable contributions to this article.

with movement—the "blocking" required in on-stage performances. Freed from the trappings of conventional production, the reader-actor can listen and attentively **hear** as each character in the play is revealed line by line.

There is an additional challenge here, and it stems from the fact that ours is a very "sound-oriented" society. We know from daily experience that sounds, either words or so-called "nonlexical" noises, produce physical responses within us. The words "stop" or "turn left" produce physical reactions just as much as, say, the sound of fingernails on a blackboard. Through the oral reading of a play, the student discovers a need to respond physically to the motivational devices that the words of the text produce. Characters in the play develop through the same stimuli that each of us meet every day: there is no room for artificiality in the re-creation of a play.

Another classroom assignment that will assist your people in their developing awareness of dramatic structure is through an adaptation of the psychologists' personality device/game called the Johari Window. In this exercise—it is really an exercise in self-disclosure and self-awareness—you draw a pattern/chart like this on the blackboard:

	Known to self	Not known to self
Known to others	I. Area of free activity (public self)	II. Blind area ("bad breath" area)
Not known to others	III. Avoided or hidden area (private self)	IV. Area of unknown activity

You can then ask your students to make a list of the things about themselves that they find valuable (assets) and things with which they are not pleased (liabilities). Ask them to put a check mark in front of the things on both lists that they feel they have revealed to other people. Then ask each member of the class to make another list. This time put down the name of each member of the class, including the writer, and follow each name with two "assets" and two "liabilities." Comparing your list with the "feedback" lists, fill out areas III and IV in the square.*

*The Johari Window can be found in several current psychology and transactional therapy studies. An application of the technique which is quite usable for the purposes described here will be found in J. William Pfeiffer and John E. Jones, **A Handbook of Structures Experiences for Human Relations Training**, Vol. I (Iowa City, Iowa: University Associates Press, 1972), p. 66.

Now, take the same principle and apply it to a character in the play you are studying. What assets and liabilities does Juliet have? How about Mercutio? The Nurse? Old Capulet? This is another way to relate character in drama to character in the students' active world. It is also a way of leading into a discussion of dramatic irony. What do we, as an audience, know about these people that they, themselves, do not know?

After you have gone through some or all of these exercises, you are really ready to read the play aloud "in performance." The students are now aware that plays are more than "make-believe." They will now be able to listen to the lines of the play as means by which characters reveal themselves to us, but their public disclosures and their private "unknown" areas of being. They will discover that they have to be literary detectives, following the leads of the lines to learn more about the people of the play. For example, Don Quixote's speech about sleep and dreams that is the focal point of the prologue to Tennessee Williams' **Camino Real** is filled with linguistic devices and foreign words that require special understanding before the student can participate in the character and in the play. To fully comprehend the speech, your student must do some investigating into Cervantes' story about the man of La Mancha. Comparisons must be made between the Spanish Quixote and Williams' version. This will lead to a discussion of both how they differ and **why** they differ. The same sort of listening perceptions will be required in plays like Arthur Miller's **Death of a Salesman** or **All My Sons**, Robert Bolt's **A Man For All Seasons**, or Paul Zindel's **The Effect of Gamma Rays . . .** Each of these involves investigation **beyond the play** to really understand what is being said and done.

Once you are ready to tackle reading the play aloud in class, suppose you double- or even triple-cast the play. As you read through the play "in performance" now, put all of the actors assigned to each role in the scene onstage at the same time. Let one person read with the other characters in the scene, but suggest that the "alter egos" interrupt any time they feel that the line says or does more than the first reader has given it. Soon the group-character is delving into the lines to validate each individual reading in his/her attempts to prove that he/she is right. They are now learning both the content and the structure of drama in the process of making their points about the character.

The purpose of what has been said up to this point is to illustrate the variety of ways we can vitalize the variety of actions that create human character, both on and off the stage. If you will, we are talking about the use of drama as a means for teaching contemporary human experience. In the reading of, and reacting to, the elements of a play we are touched by the essentially dramatic form that all experience takes. As

we listen creatively to the words of the characters in a play, we learn about ourselves. And in learning about ourselves we discover that we are not alone in this world.

Students who often seem to be alienated from the world in which they live may find, through drama, the means by which they do, in fact, participate in that world. And when this happens, students begin to see their personal roles in life as aspects of art as well. Like literature, living becomes a creative process.

It is not unrealistic to asume that, once you have stimulated the student to an awareness of his personal participation in the dramatic world, you have also begun to develop the nature of the literary act of the drama as well. The use of oral interpretation permits you to direct your students' attention to the structure of drama because you are concentrating on the characters and the actions that create the entity we have come to call a "play." In this regard, you might want to suggest some other sorts of creative dramatic activities by suggesting that your students involve themselves in an improvised dramatic situation with the same sort of concentration that small children do in their "play" games. Their "play" is really no different from the dramatic "play" of the adult world. Only the conflicts and the resolutions differ. When your students become actively engaged in the close attention to the details of language and character psychology that oral involvement with a play demands, the dramatist's art becomes far more apparent than would be possible if your class were to simply see a staged production, or even a good film of the play.

After you have led your class through the sounds-in-action of a play, it is an easy step to take them into the inherently dramatic action of narrative poem or a short story or novel. Again, by listening to, and developing the oral reading approach to, say, Robert Frost's "The Death of the Hired Man," you can draw your students into the inherent dramatic action to be found in all good literature.

If you have qualms about trying to "voice" the Frost poem, you might want to work, instead, with the series of character speeches that comprise Edgar Lee Masters' **Spoon River Anthology**. Masters has aided you here by clustering characters in sections of the poem to develop the same sort of dramatic conflict we expect from a play. The section in which Dr. Meyers and his wife tell about their lives, individually and as a married couple, make an especially easy dramatic moment for your classes. They hear and evaluate these two people, not by what they see of the characters—these people are dead and beyond this world; only their epitaphs remain. Only the words the people uttered after this life linger in the air to mirror their lives. You might want to refer your students to Thornton Wilder's **Our Town** as an interesting bridge—corollary between the dramatic worlds of the play and Masters' poem.

There are, of course, additional benefits to the oral reading-Readers Theatre approach to such "non-dramatic" works as **Spoon River**. As Professor Wallace Bacon points out in another sectin of the monograph, the rhythmic shape of the line becomes more clear when the poem is read aloud. Iambs, dactyls, and the rest become functional aspects of the literary art when the student captures their rhythms " by ear." And when these sounds are related to human speakers in a poem-play, the student may even become aware that prosody is not an isolated academic term but a viable means by which the rhythms of poetry and the rhythms of speech coincide to identify and reveal personality and character.

From such a connected work as **Spoon River** you might move to a series of poems which present conflicting views on the same subject. By using students to read these poems in a conversational style you develop "dramatic conflict" in seemingly non-dramatic material. To go back for a moment to an example from **Spoon River Anthology**, you might group a series of speakers, perhaps beginning with the Perkopyls, to provide a dramatic unit centering on family relations. In fact, you might choose to use this section of Masters' poem as the introductory section of your unit on drama. Each character must be developed and seen as an individual first; the dramatic event—the "conflict"—emerges, as it does in any play, by seeing characters with opposing points of view on the same subject.

There is another potential benefit to be derived from the use of the techniques we have outlined above. By giving ALL of your students a chance to participate in the creation of drama, you are providing an atmosphere in which the vitality of the dramatic idion may carry over to encourage potential dramatic and literary creators in your classroom. The typical situation in which literature is discussed in an abstract way is seldom very conducive to creativity except in those whose interests have already gone beyond the class. But to those who discover that language is malleable and alive—a form that sings aloud in the air, the literary dramatic idion may come to have new potential for their own creative bent. As various members of the class bring different insights to the same character in a play or a poem, the class becomes aware that the **density** of the literature is in direct proportion to the depth of insight the individual reader brings to the author's expression. Conversely, the budding author realizes the need for concreteness, even in those areas of writing that must remain abstract to a degree. The artist creates a deep well of experience; the skilled reader-listener, who will respond vitally to that experience, recreates the depth of the experience congruent with his own awareness.

Essentially, we have been saying that the use of oral interpretation in the teaching of drama in your classroom is yet another means by which you reinforce the premise that literature in its many forms is a manifestation of the experience of human beings in an all-too-human world. As your students become aware that drama is the world inside of and around themselves, they will begin to look beyond the classroom recognizing the experience of drama in life and on stage. And it is in life itself that drama has its most obvious presence.

The Authors

Dr. Ralph L. Lane is a Professor of Theatre Education and Oral Interpretation at Illinois State University in Normal. He has taught speech, theatre, and English in high schools throughout Illinois. He is active in state and national speech/theatre professional organizations and has served as President of the Illinois Speech Association and as Chairman of the SCA Educational Policies Board. He has edited the state journal and the Secondary School Theatre Association Journal.

Dr. Jack C. Rang
(see note on page 7)

THE PRESENCE OF THE NARRATOR IN PROSE FICTION

Robert S. Breen

NOTE: A videotape exemplifying concepts found in this article is available from the Illinois Office of Education (see Selected Resources for the address.)

The primitive hunter returns from his/her conquest of a vicious predator and he/she is expected, since there was no witness, to recount the adventure. He/she tells the tale in the first person with grunts and gestures and intimations of the ego pronoun, "I." With the coming of civilization it became possible for the audience to **imagine** such adventures and to take pleasure in the emphatic identification with the storyteller's account. Such first-hand accounts as those of the caveman hunters give the stamp of authenticity to the early accounts of adventures—"A funny thing happened to me on the way to the forum." And even since, literature has honored first-person narration in print.

We respond, as readers, to the sense of immediacy of any tale that begins, "Call me Ishmael," or "Jewel and I come up from the field." But notice—in Melville's novel, there are soliloquies by Ahab, Stubb, and Starbuck that Ishmael did not and could not have overheard.

When the narrator of a fiction is identified with the personal pronoun, "I," we feel free to ask who he/she is, where he/she is at the time of the telling of the story, when, why, and how he/she narrates the tale. That is, we are interested in his/her epic situation—the time and place of the narration.

When the storyteller is a character within the story, we can answer the questions of when and where; but when the storyteller is a consciousness outside the story, who cannot be located in time or place, we are sometimes baffled as to who and what he/she is; but there is a general agreement that all stories are situated and a "narrator is presenting a story orally to a listening public. Someone narrates something to some."[1]

It is often assumed, mistakenly, that because **some** narrators identify themselves with the ego pronoun, "I," that all other narrators, who eschew that identification, are narrators telling their story in the **third** person. No, all storytellers in the oral tradition speak in the first person. They may begin their story in the most traditional way—"once upon a time"—but it is **their** voice, **their** gestures, and facial expressions that give the story a first-person quality. It is axiomatic that when a storyteller speaks, he/she speaks in the first person and speaks to an audience or reader in the second person, about some characters and events in the third person. The formula for all fictional discourse is a first person addressing a second person about a third person. I talk to **you** about it or **him** or **her**.

In a written work of literature there are always two levels of speech in evidence—"That on which the characters speak to each other, to themselves, to an implied audience, or to God, and that on which the writer speaks to us."[2] Literary ctitics often concern themselves with the presence of the author in his/her works, but this paper will deal solely with the presence of the narrator, who may, indeed, be the author's surrogate or a character imaginatively conceived in a different mold.

Autobiographical Narrator

The epic situation for narrators who address the reader from within the frame of the story is generally clear. If the narrator is the main character relating an autobiographical first-person novel, we know who he/she is, why he/she is telling the tale, when and how he/she is narrating. These elements of the epic situation give substance to the storyteller; he/she is a "person"upon whom we can focus our attention and to whom we listen with rapt attention. The "au-

---

[1] Bertril Romberg, **Studies in the Narrative Technique of the First-Person Novel** (Stockholm: Almquist & Wiksell, 1962), p. 33.

[2] George T. Wright, **The Poet in the Poem** (Berkley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962), p. 19.

tobiographical" technique of narrating is admirably suited to tales of adventure as well as stories of reflection and self-analysis.

The opening paragraph of **Treasure Island** establishes the epic situation of the first-person narrator:

> Squire Trelawney, Dr. Livesey, and the rest of **these** gentlemen have asked me to write down the whole particulars about Treasure Island. . .**I take up my pen** in the year of grace 17--, **and go back** to the time when my father kept the Admiral Benbow Inn, and the brown old seaman, with the sabre out, first took up his lodging under our roof. **I remember him as if it were yesterday** (italics mine).

We learn that the narrator has an easy association with gentlemen of the eighteenth century, that he is learned enough to write, that his father was an innkeeper and that his recollections will take him back to his boyhood. The opening of this story provides a frame, another time, and another place, remote from the time and place of the main action. Such a frame allows the storyteller in his "removed" situation to be more judicious, more accurate, more thorough in his interpretations because he is not immediately involved. Yet the authenticity of the events is certified by his presence at the "actual" events which he remembers "as if it were yesterday."

Activity

The epic situation of this narrator can be demonstrated in the classroom by asking a student to speak to the class as though he/she were telling them the story and making a gestural reference to "these gentlemen" as though they shared the front of the room with him/her. When the student says, "I take up my pen" let him/her sit at the desk and perhaps take up his/her pen, but he/she need not write yet because "I take up my pen" may be thought of as a gesture **preparatory** to writing. The phrase "and go back" is a reference to "memory." His mind goes back, but the pen is prepared to go forward in time. When the student reaches the phrase "I remember him as if it were yesterday" the pen and the writing give way to memory and the action of the tale on the inner stage of his mind. Films have the convention of letting a character start to write an account of something that happened in the past and then dissolving to actual scenes of the recollection as though the audience was privileged to see for itself the remembered events. If the student in the classroom exercise is seated at the desk somewhat to the right of center, he/she might rise and move to the left as he/she remembers "as if it were yesterday." The action of Jim (the **young** narrator) and his mother can go forward as the older narrator observes and perhaps, because of the vividness of his memory, he can share in some of the action. At the very least, the young narrator can enter into a dialogue with his older self when especially vivid experiences are narrated.

Huckleberry Finn is a novel told in the first person by the main character and, like **Treasure Island**, is "written" sometime after the chronicled events. Conventional dramatizations of this novel ignore the frame that Twain has created. Here are the opening lines:

> You don't know about me without you have read a book by the name of **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer**; but that ain't no matter. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the turth, mainly. There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth.

The heading of Chapter I is "Discover Moses and the Bulrushes," so we assume that the "I" in the title is the one addressing "you," the reader, in the opening lines. But the "I" is a character **in a book** written by someone other than the speaker. However, this "character," this "I," also has a position **outside** the book

about Tom Sawyer because he intimates that there is a truth that Mark Twain stretched. In the second paragraph Huck refers again to **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer** and introduces his paraphrase of the book with "Now the way that book winds up is this." The impression the reader has by now is that Mark Twain, who is listed as the author of **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn** on the title page of **this** book, is, despite occasional lapses, simply a reporter of true events.

When the reader gets to the end of **Huckleberry Finn** he discovers that not Twin, but Finn, is the author of the book:

> . . . and so there ain't nothing more to write about, and I'm rotten glad of it, because if I'd'a knowed what a trouble it is to make a book I wouldn't 'a' tackled it, and ain't a-going to no more.

The fusion of Twain and Finn as authors of books is furthered by an interesting reference on the second page of the opening chapter:

> After supper she (The Widow Douglas) got out her book and learned me about Moses and the Bulrushes, and I was in a sweat to find out all about him; but by and by she let it out that Moses had been dead a considerable long time; so then I didn't care no more about him, because I don't take no stock in dead people.

This rejection of the "once-upon-a-time" story suggests a Finn-Twain preference for the immediate, the real, and the palpable tale.

One further indication that Twain and Finn have an authorial share in the creation of the latter's adventures is the dialect that Twain provides for Huckleberry. It is an invented language, not a transcription of an authentic dialect. The clearest proof is to be found in those passages where Huck's consciousness of his inner self is the richest. Early in the novel he says, "I set down in a chair by the window . . . . I felt so lonesome I most wished I was dead. The stars were shining, and the leaves rustled in the woods ever so mournful . . . ." The reader senses a correspondence between Huck Finn, who was unhappy in the company of The Widow and Miss Watson, and Mark Twain, who may not have been altogether happy in the genteel society of his wife's friends. The nature of this complex relationship between the book as fiction or history and life as it is lived can be developed in the classroom. The performance of the narration should feature three books, **Adventures of Tom Sawyer**, **The Bible**, and **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**. Let Huck, the narrator, talk to "you," the audience, about the first two books, **Tom Sawyer** and **The Bible**, but when he gets to the passage, "I set down in a chair by the window . . . . I felt so lonesome I most wished I was dead" let Huck start to write, for that is where Twain and Huck come close to each other.

In **Treasure Island**, the impression is clearly given that the "author," who is recording the early adventures of Jim, is Jim grown older and recollecting the events. In **Huckleberry Finn** it is plain that Huck has been recording his adventures as they occur, for at the end of the novel when he says, "Nothing More to Write," the adventures, too, are concluded. Huck's epic situation is but slightly removed in time and space from his situation in the adventures.

Much of contemporary fiction is framed in a point of view or epic situation that allows for comments on the manner of the telling of the story. J. D. Salinger opens **Zooey** with:

> . . . what I'm about to offer isn't really a short story at all but a sort of prose home movie, and those who have seen the footage have strongly advised me against nurturing any elaborate distribution plans for it. The dissenting group, it's my privilege and headache to divulge, consists of the three featured players, themselves.

When Salinger allows the "players" to comment on the movie of which they have been a part, the reader assumes that they are "real" and the movie is "fiction." The impression of metafiction is increased when the author concludes the introduction to **Zooey**:

> In just a moment, the youngest Glass boy will be seen reading an exceedingly lengthy letter (which will be reprinted here, **in full**, I can safely promise) sent to him by his eldest living brother, Buddy Glass. The style of the letter, I'm told, bears a considerably more than passing resemblance to the style, or written mannerisms, of this narrator, and the general reader will no doubt jump to the heady conclusion that the writer of the letter and I are one and the same person. Jump he will, and, I'm afraid, jump he should. We will, however, leave this Buddy Glass in the third person from here on in. At least, I see no good reason to take him out of it.

The reader is watching the "home movie" because the boy is seen reading and the promise is offered that the letter will be printed. Another layer of the epic situation is evident in the reference to the writer of the letter and the writer of the story as being one and the same. As we read **Zooey** we are to remember that the narrator, the "I" who is telling the story, is the

same as Buddy Glass, a third-person character in the story. This division of the self into first and third persons reflects the psychological peculiarity experienced when watching oneself in a movie. Even more than in a mirror, the moving pictures of oneself give the impression of bifurcation, alienation, a common condition in contemporary culture. Salinger has been successful in dramatizing the "identity crisis" through his characters—Holden Caulfield, Franny and Zooey, Seymour Glass, and Salinger's "alter-ego and collaborator," Buddy Glass.

John Barth and Vladimir Nabokov have both been fruitfully experimental in writing metafiction, that is, fiction that has for its primary interest reflections on the art of making fiction. The relationship between art and reality is another way of putting it. An early novel of Barth's, **End of the Road**, begins "In a sense, I'm Jacob Horner." The reader's expectations are rather different here than when he reads "Call Me Ishmael." What does the character, Jacob Horner, mean by "in a sense . . ."? The meaning is borne in on us as we read and find Horner saying:

> All the way to the restaurant, all through the meal, all the way home, it was as though there were no Jacob Horner today. After I'd eaten I returned to my room, sat in my rocker, and rocked, barely sentient, for a long time, thinking of nothing.

and again:

> On these days Jacob Horner, except in a meaningless metabolistic sense, ceased to exist altogether, for I was without a character, without a personality: there was no **ego**, no **I**.

"These days" were passed in 1953, but Horner is writing of them two years later, "I am writing this at 7:55 in the evening of Tuesday, October 4, 1955, upstairs in the dormitory." But **in a sense** he wrote his script **before** the events, for he learns from his psychiatrist:

> . . . . a man's integrity consists in being faithful to the script he has written for himself . . . . It's extremely important that you learn to assume these masks wholeheartedly. Don't think there's anything behind them: there isn't. **Ego** means **I**, and **I** means **ego**, and the ego by definition is a mask. Where there's no ego—this is you on the bench—there's no **I**.

Jacob Horner's sense of dissociation seems strongest when he is least sentient, but even during a time of intense feeling, when he is unmasked he still suffers a schizoid division: when he puts a question to Jacob Hunter. On the other hand, the narrator's emotion was "pretty much unselfconscious."

> . . . For the first time since I'd met the Morgans, I experienced a sudden, marvelous sensation of guilt . . . . I was appalled . . . . Does Jacob Horner betray the only man he can think of as a friend, and then double the felony by concealing the betrayal? I was anguished as never before in my life. What is more, my anguish was pretty much unselfconscious: I was not aware of watching Jacob Horner suffer anguish. Had I been, I believe I'd have seen a face very like Laocoon's.

It would seem, then, that under the pressure of a strong and genuine emotion there is a tendency for individuation to take place. Jacob's personality emerges and coalesces with his ego, his "I," but not completely nor permanently.

Activity

> In the classroom, students could demonstrate the psychological structure of John Barth's novel, **End of the Road**, by putting the "I" narrator, who is writing the novel, in the dormitory room in 1955; while the "I" narrator, who appears in the first-person narration of the action of the story, **along with** the third person, Jacob Horner, shares the "script he's written for himself."

Barth begins his collection of stories, **Lost in the Funhouse**, with a frametale, which he says in an Author's note "is one - two - or three - dimensional, whichever one regards a Moebius strip as being." On one page, in large letters running from top to bottom, are the words ONCE UPON A TIME THERE and on the reverse side WAS A STORY THAT BEGAN. There is a dotted line that separates these words from the rest of the page and the instructions: "Cut on dotted line. Twist end once and fasten AB to ab, CD to cd." The curious quality of the moebius is that you can move from the inside surface to the outside surface without interrupting your movement.

One can sense the value of the frametale as symbolic of an uninterrupted movement from the outside to the inside of one's experiences. The first story in **Lost in the Funhouse** is called "Night Sea Journey" and opens with:

> One way or another, no matter which theory of our journey is correct, it's myself I address; to whom I rehearse as to a stranger our history and condition, and will disclose my secret hope though I sink for it.
>
> "Is the journey my invention? Do the night, the sea, exist at all, I ask myself, apart from my experience of them? Do I myself exist, or

> is this a dream? Sometimes I wonder. And if I am, who am I? The Heritage I supposedly transport? . . . . Such are the questions that beset my intervals of rest."

The questions Barth raises and the moebius of the frametale echo the mythic time-sense that suggests that all time is one, as T.S. Eliot says in his **Four Quartets** at the opening of "East Coker": "In my beginning is my end," and at the conclusion of the same quartet: "In my end is my beginning." This circular sense contradicts the conventional notion that man progresses from one condition of perfectability to another through a series of natural and casually related stages.

Barth is, of course, not alone in reflecting the existential conditions of contemporary life. Lawrence Durrell in his novel, **The Alexandria Quartet**, reverses the conditions that once prevailed in the oral tradition of storytelling. The ancient bard frequently began his story with "Once upon a time. . ." but Durrell concludes **Clea**, the last novel in the quartet, with those very words:

> Yes, one day I found myself writing down with trembling fingers the four words (four letters! four faces!) with which every storyteller since the world began has staked his slender claim to the attention of his fellow men. Words which presage simply the old story of an artist coming of age. I wrote: "Once upon a time. . ." and felt as if the whole universe had given me a nudge!

About the conclusion of **Clea** Robert Scholes says:

> . . . we feel very strongly a kind of duality which prevades Durrell's work: we are pulled toward the primitive by those four magical words and by the description of the artist as a mere storyteller, but we are also made aware of the modernity of the work; we are pulled toward the sophisticated by the preoccupation of the passage with the art of story-telling. Like so many modern works, this is the portrait of the artist . . . about a character in the book who is writing a book in which he is a character.[3]

Scholes has described the epic situation in which the narrators we have been discussing find themselves. The degree of complexity of the internal relationships has varied. The variations can best be appreciated by students if they have a chance to dramatize those relationships by following carefully the internal cues about who is telling the story, where he/she is at the time of the telling, what he/she is telling, and why.

---

[3] Robert Scholes, **The Fabulators**, Oxford University Press, New York, 1967, pp. 17-18.

Before we consider another class of narrators we should examine the novel that brings together Scholes' interest in "once upon a time" and the "portrait of the artist." That novel, of course, is James Joyce's **A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man**. The novel begins with an epigraph taken from Ovid's **Metamorphoses**: "He turned his thinking toward unknown arts." The reference is to Daedalus, who fashioned for himself and for his son, Icarus, wings that would effect their escape from Crete. Daedalus, the artist, or artificer, becomes in the novel Stephen Dedalus. It seems appropriate that the story of Stephen's development as an artist should begin with the ancient phrase shared by storytellers in the oral tradition—"Once upon a time. . ." and so Chapter I opens:

> Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo . . . . His father told him that story: his father looked at him through a glass: he had a hairy face.
>
> He was baby tuckoo. The moocow came down the road where Betty Byrne lived: she sold lemon platt.
>
> O, the wild rose blossoms
> On the little green place.
>
> He sang that song. That was his song.
>
> O, the green wothe botheth.

What is the epic situation of the narrator at the opening of this novel? It would seem from the use of baby talk, "nicens" and "moocow," and the further acknowledgement that "his father told him that story," that the narrator is the father. But no quotation marks set the story off from the narration that identifies the storyteller as the father. The ellipsis that interrupts the moocow story suggests that the father goes on with the story while the narrator identifies him and adds: "his father looked at him through a glass." Such a perspective is appropriate to a small child who has yet to learn that his father is wearing glasses. The syntax of the sentence suggests a primitive management of the language—three brief parallel statements separated by colons.

The next paragraph begins: "He was baby tuckoo." In the preceding paragraph the antecedent of "he" was the father, but it cannot be in this paragraph. It is either the father referring to the baby to whom he is telling the story or it is the baby himself introducing himself as "baby tuckoo"; perhaps it is another narrator in an epic situation outside the story of the baby and his father. The next sentence, beginning "The moocow came down the road where Betty

Byrne lived . . . . " indicates, perhaps, that the "once upon a time" has been transformed into the "here and now." The road is not a road in a fantasy, but a "real" road with which the baby listener associates a "real" person, Betty Byrne.

The song is sung by the father because it does not employ baby talk, and yet the father used baby talk in telling the story; perhaps he would do the same in singing the song. Again, one cannot be sure who is speaking and who is singing because the antecedent of "He" in "He sang that song" is not certain. The father can sing the song with or without baby talk, but the baby cannot sing without saying "wothe botheth." We must return to the statement, ". . . his father looked at him through a glass." There is no baby talk here, but instead adult speech; nevertheless, the perspective is that of a young child. There are three levels of narration in this passage: (1) the father who is narrating the moocow story, (2) the immature perspective of the young child, which is (3) expressed in the immature style of an older narrator. In other words, there is a mature father capable of talking baby talk, a child's vision expressed in an unpolished style which is nevertheless more mature than that of the child who still speaks with infatile speech.

Activity

It would be an interesting classroom exercise to form groups of three students each who would arrange the text of the opening passages of **A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man** using three narrators. The point of the exercise would be to discover how many ways the ambiguities of the passage could be expressed.

"Third Person" Narrator

We have discussed narrators who appear in the story as characters and therefore have physical attributes that permit them to be characterized when they are performed orally. It is more difficult to perform narrators who tell their stories from **outside** the action. They do not have tangible features like age, sex, height, and weight, that give substance to their personalities. Consequently, readers tend to ignore or overlook the very real qualities of such narrators. They are often referred to as "third-person" narrators, because they never refer to themselves with the ego pronoun that would nominate them as "first-person" storytellers. The distinction is sometimes understood. Narrators whose epic situation is **within** the story are not without those prejudices common to all characters who are in the condition of life. For the same reason, they cannot exercise omniscience. For those stories requiring the services of an objectively reliable narrator, or one capable of omniscience, the epic situation must be established **outside** the story.

Oral Interpretation of the Narrator

We have already suggested that all stories are told **by** someone **to** someone **about** someone or something. It is no less true of those stories narrated from without than of those narrated from within. In both cases a first person speaks to a second person about a third person. In both cases the style, the manner of speaking, the register of his/her language will characterize the narrator. With respect to the external narrator the language of the narration is the only index to his/her character. Nevertheless, it is sufficient. It is often said that style is the "voice" of the author; it is, likewise, the "voice" of the narrator. When a student reads aloud, he/she gives substance to the metaphor that likens style to voice. Too, when the student speaks the language of literature, he/she gives not only voice but body to the style. Speech, as well as nonverbal behavior, is gesture. Voice and body must be congruent in the successful communication of a literary text.

The question for the student, then, becomes "How am I to make my vocal and bodily behavior congruent with the written text?" It is true that written and spoken language generally differ. Without the benefit of gestures and paralinguistic elements such as pitch, rate, volume, and vocal quality, written language is forced to be explicit in its symbolic statements. Written language is a somewhat abstract dialect of spoken language, but that does not mean that written language may not be spoken. Shakespeare wrote blank verse, but his plays were intended to be spoken. No matter how formal the diction of a written text may be, it is likely that the author tested it on his tongue before committing it to paper. What seems awkward to the tongue will no doubt appear awkward in print. Virginia Woolf spoke of the difficulties of written expression in her essay on Montaigne: "Face, voice, and accent eke out our words and express their feebleness with character in speech. But the pen is a rigid instrument, it can say very little . . . ."[4]

The master of fiction, Henry James, urges on us the importance of speaking a literary text aloud:

> It is scarce necessary to note that the highest test of any literary form conceived in the light of "poetry"—to apply that term in its highest literary sense—hangs back unpardonably from its office when it fails to lend itself to **vivavoce** treatment . . . . The essential property of such a form as that is to give out its finest and most numerous secrets, and to give them out most gratefully, under the closest pressure—which is of course the pres-

---

[4]Virginia Woolf, **The Common Reader: First and Second Series** (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1948), pp. 188-89.

sure of the attention articulately **sounded**. Let it reward as much as it will and can the soundless, the "quiet" reading, it still deplorably "muffs" its chance and its success, still trifles with the roused appetite to which it can never honestly be indifferent, by not having so arranged itself as to owe the flower of its effect to the act and process of apprehension that so beautifully asks most of it. It then infallibly, and not less beautifully, most responds; for I have nowhere found vindicated the queer thesis that the right values of interesting prose depend all on withheld tests—that is on its being, for very pity and shame, but skimmed and scanted, shuffled and mumbled. Gustave Flaubert has somewhere in this connexion an excellent word—to the effect that any imaged prose that fails to be richly rewarding in return for a competent utterance ranks itself as wrong through not being "in the condition of life."[5]

This is not the place to examine the "vocal" subtleties of written language, but it may be helpful to suggest that there are classifications with which one can begin the examination of a written text for its speech equivalent. Linguists refer to the vocabulary and syntax available to us in literary texts as "registers." According to Jonathan Raban, there are four main factors governing vocabulary and syntax: "whom we are talking to, what we are talking about, whether we are speaking or writing, and what medium we are using—whether we are writing a letter, an advertisement, or a lecture, and so on."[6] Novels often adopt a single register and stick to it. The epistolary novel committed to the register of letter writing will be conversational. In James Purdy's short story, "The Sermon," he adopts the register of the pulpit. Authors may adopt more than one register for their novels and the oral reader would do well to adapt his behavior so as to agree with the registers of the text.

The nonverbal behavior of the narrator is no less important than his verbal behavior, but the relationship is often tenuous. Since the author of narrative fiction cannot afford the luxury of actors to fill in or fill out the implications of his written text, he must describe verbally the appropriate nonverbal behavior:

> Though a novelist cannot rely on actors to make the gestures in his text explicit, he can rely on the qualified reader to be something of an actor or, rather, an act-er, who will at the very least make subliminal movements. Melville, in **Moby-Dick**, could not bring himself to rely on the reader's interpretation of "There she blows" as anything more than a verbal indication that the whale was spouting: so he had to **describe** the way in which Ahab spoke the fateful words. In Chapter CXXXIII Captain Ahab sights Moby Dick:
>
> > "There she blows! there she blows!—there she blows! There again!—there again!" he cried, in long-drawn, lingering, melodic tones, attuned to the gradual prolongings of the whale's visible jets.
>
> Melville wants the reader to hear Ahab and to see the whale; if he can make the reader see the whale **through** Ahab, he will impress the reader with the kinship, the deep identity of Ahab with Moby Dick. So Ahab sings out, "There she blows!" in rhythm with the whale's spouting. Ahab's speech, therefore, is not merely an expression of the whale's proximity, but is itself a gesture in kinaesthetic imitation of Moby Dick.[7]

Notice the value of "blows" with its initial plosive sound and the successive continuants that follow it, suggesting the nature of spouting. Notice, too, intimations of the continuity of the spout by a succession of strong accents "long-drawn, lingering," and the repetition of similar vowel and consonant sounds.

The evidence in this paper that the verbal and nonverbal behavior of the oral interpreter of a fictional text are dependent on the stylistic features of that text may seem slight. But the fact remains the speech **is** action: it is a speech act to **say**, "Cut that out!"; it is an act in that the speaker is **ordering** the addressee; it is likewise an act on the part of the addressee who may be **enraged** or **frightened**. The whole question of style, stylistics, and semantics is important and significant in any estimation of the meaning of literature, but it is necessary to curtail a fuller examination of those matters in favor of noting a facet of style that is too often neglected—vocal style.

Our brief analysis of the "phonetic gestures" in **Moby-Dick** indicates the importance of adding mimetic and analogical features to the symbolic structure of the printed text of literature. Facial cinematography has demonstrated that in various languages there are similar behaviors in baby talk. The vowel distortions are universally conditioned by the pursing of the lips, a phonetic gesture of kissing.

Darwin regarded emotions as symptomatic of frustrated adaptive behavior, so that fear represented

---

[5]Henry James, **The Art of the Novel** (New York: Scribner's, 1950), pp. 346-7.

[6]Jonathan Raban, **The Technique of Modern Fiction** (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969), p. 145.

[7]Wallace A. Bacon & Robert S. Breen, **Literature as Experience** (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1959), pp. 296-7.

phylogenetic flight, while anger represented phylogenetic fight. Since muscular contraction is an essential element in preparation for combat and in combat itself, Ivan Fonagy sees in the glottal stop a specific muscular contraction. "The metaphor of 'strangled voice' seems to contain the germ of an explanation: 'strangling' foreshadows homicide. Here we have an action which, according to the magical conception of the world, should suffice in itself to eliminate one's adversary."[8] The glottal stop is considered to be harsh and unpleasant and readily associated with the "hard attach" of anger and hatred.

An author will recommend in his written text specific phonemes, but an oral reader may through "the mimetic movements of the organs of phonation graft a second message onto the original one being transmitted by the sequence of phonemes."

The oral reader can, on the basis of his phonological style, evoke a person by imitating his fashion of speaking, "by adopting a certain number of phonic, lexical, and syntactical peculiarities of (his) idiolect." Ivan Fonagy concludes:

> Verbal (vocal) style is a precious accomplishment which integrates, with linguistic—that is grammatical and conscious—communication, psychic elements which would otherwise remain unexpressed; and which transform autistic play into verbal message . . . . Style "acts out" its content, and this involves a real activity for verbal concepts. This realization presupposes a transposition, the drama must be played out in the microcosm of the glottis, pharynx, buccal and nasal cavities—a considerable reduction of dimension and intensity. The unconscious, however, is scarcely aware of changes of dimension; the phonetic gesturing satisfies our thirst for concrete reality.[9]

At the very least, we have demonstrated that the oral reader contributes to the illumination of literature by virtue of his/her analogical encoding, by paralinguistic and bodily action. At the most we have encouraged the student to regard literature as a highly personalized field of discourse in which active participation is essential if he/she is to develop understanding.

---

[8] Ivan Fonagy, "The Functions of Vocal Style," in Seymour Chatman, ed., **Literary Style: A Symposium** (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 160.

[9] Ibid., p. 171.

List of Recommended Readings

Cunningham, J.V., **The Problem of Style.** Greenwich, Conn: Fawcett Publications, Inc., 1966.

Davis, Robert Murray, ed., **The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism.** Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.

Enkvist, Nils Erick, John Spencer, and Michael Gregory. **Linguistics and Style.** London: Oxford University, 1964.

Goldknopf, David. **The Life of the Novel.** Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972.

Joos, Martin, **The Five Clocks.** New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1967.

O'Connor, William Van, ed., **Forms of Modern Fiction.** Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948.

Pearce, Roy Harvey, ed., **Experience in the Novel.** New York: Columbia University Press, 1968.

Scholes, Robert and Robert Kellogg. **The Nature of Narrative.** New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Sontag, Susan, "On Style," in her **Against Interpretation.** New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1966.

Souvage, Jacques., **An Introduction to the Study of the Novel.** Gent: Wetenschappelijke Uitgeverij, 1965.

Wellek, Rene and Austin Warren. **Theory of Literature.** New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949.

The Author

Dr. Robert S. Breen is a Professor of Oral Interpretation at Northwestern University in Evanston. He has written many articles for speech journals, written one of the leading oral interpretation texts with Dr. Bacon and cut interpretation records. He has done much television work with chamber theatre techniques.

PRACTICAL PROSODY—

THE INTERPRETER'S APPROACH TO POETRY

Editor's Preface:

If there is one form of literature that seems at first look to be irrelevant to students, it is poetry. True, you may have some people in your classes who write poetry on their own, but even these students are very apt to say "I don't like most of the **usual** poetry."

Is there any help for this kind of attitude? Yes, I think there is. Most students have to know how a thing **works** (maybe even **why** it works) before they can get very interested in what it does in their lives. A first step is to try to show your classes that poetry works on patterns—patterns in space, on the printed page, and patterns of sounds, in the air. The name for this patterning is a rather formidable word—prosody. Professor Wallace A. Bacon, the author of the discussion that follows, has defined prosody as "the art or science of patterning in poetry." On the pages that follow, Professor Bacon discusses the functions of prosody as a study of patterns. From this basis we can explore some ways in which you can get your students involved in the patterns that make poetry the condensed and exciting literary experience it **can** be.

But let us begin with Professor Bacons's discussion.

PROSODY

—Wallace A. Bacon

NOTE: A videotape exemplifying concepts found in this article is available from the Illinois Office of Education. (see Selected Resources for the address.)

The study of prosody ought, particularly for beginning students of poetry, to be a study of the heartbeat of poems. Nothing is to be gained by making it seem like an abstract mathematical matter, a routine counting of strange things called iambs, trochees, anapests, dactyls, spondees, and pyrrhics.

The human mind seems automatically to seek patterns. Only by grouping, relating, structuring can the mind manage to deal with all the matters which arise in it; total lack of structure is literally unbearable to the psyche.

We tend naturally to pattern repeated sounds, the clickety-clickety-ckickety-clickety of train wheels crossing joints in a track very quickly turns into an alternation of two's: clickety-CLICK, ckickety-CLICK, clickety-CLICK, clickety-CLICK—or a more complex pattern (but still of two's): clickety-CLICK, clickety-CLACK; clickety-CLICK, clickety-CLACK. Or one listens to the tick of a clock, and it first seems to say tick-tick-tick-tick-tick; but quickly it becomes tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock, and usually one of the sounds acquires a kind of stress in the ear: tick-TOCK, tick—TOCK, tick-TOCK. Almost everyone is aware of this habit of the ear of actually changing sounds. The clock doesn't change, but the perception in the ear changes.

This patterning of things in two's is perfectly normal. The mind operates with oppositions: good is meaningful in terms of its opposite, evil; day is meaningful in terms of its opposite, night, etc. And paralleling this tendency to pattern, inherent in the body (mind), is the beat of the pulse, the regular systole and diastole of the circulatory system. (It is no accident that the terms **systole** and **diastole** are employed in classical prosody to designate the shortening and lengthening of syllables.)

Hence it is useful to the student to know that—at least in the English language—traditional poetry has inherent in it an alternation of two values, called long and short, or heavy and light, or stressed and unstress-

ed (the terms employed vary from user to user). Such a line as Wordsworth's

x ' x ' x ' x '
The piercing eye, the thoughtful brow

is absolutely regular in its alternation of light and heavy, following very simply the usual pronunciation of the words employed. It would be difficult for anyone to miss the pattern here. But even in so regular a line, monotony is not allowed to set in, because Wordsworth breaks the line in two with the use of the comma; we get not only an alternation of two values, but two pairs each containing the pattern x / x /. Each of these little "bundles" of x / is called a foot; the name **iamb** (or **iambus**) is given to the foot so that we can refer to it by name. Everyone likes to have a name, an identity! If the pattern were reversed (/x), the foot would be called a **trochee**, as in the following line:

/ x / x / x / x
Ere the steamer bore him eastward. . . .

Few poems move with such regularity for very long. But it is important to remember that, in traditional (or one might say "regular") verse, **the sense of the abstract pattern remains in the poet's ear**. He writes against that pattern—**orchestrates** it. In "London, 1802," Wordsworth has a line which is regular:

x / x / x / x / x /
Thy Soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart

but in the same poem, we find the line

/ x x / x / / xx /
England hath need of thee; she is a fen

where the first foot is reversed (a trochee rather than the prevailing iamb of the poem) and the fourth foot is also probably reversed (though one **could** read it as **iambic**). The opening line of the poem has the same reversal in the initial foot and in the second foot:

/ x / x
Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour

One might read that second foot as a spondee (/ /), though that seems rather heavy on the fourth syllable. But the point to remember is that in Wordsworth's ear, ticking away, is that abstract pattern x / x / x / x / x /. (Reversal of the inital foot in an iambic line is one of the commonest variations in English poetry.) And a very regular line like "Thy Soul . . ." helps us remember the beat.

There are other kinds of names to help us structure our awareness of the beat of poems: a line with four feet is called tetrameter; a line with five is called pentameter. A five-foot line made up of iambs is called iambic pentameter. (When iambic pentameter is unrhymed, it is called "blank verse," the greatest prosodic form in the history of English poetry.)

It is common, in English verse,* for a pyrrhic foot (x x) to be followed by a spondee (/ /), as if the lack of stress in one foot is accounted for by an overplus of stress in the next:

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies

x x / / x / x / x /
When a new planet swims into his ken**

(Keats)

Many questions of stress must be left "flexible": In the poem "To —," by Shelley, the line "Rose leaves, when the rose is dead" provides an interesting case. For many of us, when we refer to the leaves of roses as "rose leaves," the word **rose** will receive more stress than **leaves**—but it is perfectly sensible for someone with another feeling about it to argue that the two deserve equal weight. It isn't a matter of saying that one reading is "right" and another "wrong," but they are not identical readings. Most people would agree that "when" receives lighter stress than either of the earlier words. Hence one reader may scan the line / / x x / x / and another may scan it as / x x x / x /. Or it might be scanned, still differently, as / x / x / x /. If one begins thinking in terms of three or four degrees of stress,*** one might mark the line thus (with 1 as the lightest stress and 4 as the heaviest):

4 2 3 1 3 2 4 or 4 3 2 1 3 1-or-2 4

You will note that we still have, in either of these cases, alternation of heavier and lighter stress, but our pattern permits a greater range of values. **It is still the abstract pattern of two's which is working in the poet's ear**, an alternation of heavy and light.

Where poems have seven syllables per line, one cannot divide the lines neatly into three feet or four feet with two syllables apiece, of course. Sometimes it isn't worth trying; the more important fact is the alternation. In the Shelley poem referred to here,

---

*i.e., verse written in English, not simply verse written by Englishmen.

**The vertical lines indicate foot divisions.

***A four-stress scheme is frequently used by certain modern prosodists.

many lines begin with what seems to be trochaic foot (**music, vibrates, odors** all begin lines and all are accented on the first syllable). This may suggest that the poem is essentially trochaic. But one must confront, in the same poem, such a line as "And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone," which has eight syllables and seems clearly iambic. Shelley often "hovers" between a rising (less followed by more stress) and a falling (more followed by less stress) rhythm.

Rhythm is the word applied to the poet's orchestration of the abstract scheme of stresses.

Perhaps enough has been said to suggest that students ought to be encouraged to find their own patterns. Ask them to mark stresses as **they** see them. Listen to their markings. When their patterns violate literal meanings in the poem, try to show them how. But when their patterns are matters of taste, subtleties in perception, make clear to them that they have a right to these perceptions and encourage them to talk about them.

English is a stress language (as contrasted, say, with Chinese which depends upon varying tones—pitch levels—rather than stress to govern meanings). But since our ear is so heavily conditioned to hearing stress, we often respond to variations in pitch as if they were variations in stress. A very high syllable following a very low syllable, even if it is deliberately sounded with less stress, may be "heard" by an auditor as "louder." Try saying the line "I tell you I am not going" and emphasize the word **not** by lowering the volume but raising the pitch unnaturally high and increasing the tension in your voice. Most people will feel, automatically, that you have increased the amount of stress on the word. Poets build these "natural" responses to pitch into their stress patterns. The ear hears what it thinks it hears.

It is possible to distinguish between **stress** and **accent**, and it is often useful in the study of prosody to do so. Accent is the normal pronunciation stress on a syllable of a word of more than a single syllable. In the word **secondary** there are two accents, the heavier one on the first syllable, the lighter one on the third. There are two unaccented syllables. These normal stress arrangements determined by accent are a pattern more or less dictated to the poet by "proper" pronunciation, though he/she may wrench these normal patterns from time to time (as in ballad meter, where one sometimes finds **country** rather than country). But English is full of monosyllabic which (because they are monosyllables) have no accent. They may or may not have stress. (Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as "unstressed," since any oralization of a word involves **some** degree of stress, but traditionally we have called light syllables "unstressed.")

Prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliary verbs, personal pronouns consisting of a single syllable do not normally receive stress in English. For example, in the line

The stag at eve had drunk his fill

there is no stress (i.e., very light stress) on **the, at, had,** or **his.** If the poet had wanted to make a particular point of **his** (he had drunk **his** fill, even if someone else hadn't), he could "promote" a stress on this normally unstressed pronoun. Poetry often promotes stresses, so that we tend to get much more attention to stresses in poems than in prose—and, of course, the stresses are patterned in small "bundles."

Attention to these patternings is essential to the comprehension of the poem's rhythmic life. The **felt** poem has its tempo just as individuals have their tempos. The energy levels of individuals, their habitual patterns of movement, their states of tension vary; prosody is a way of looking at the energy levels, patterns of movement, and states of tension of poems. (There are other ways, but this is one of the most important.)

One of the values of asking students to read poems aloud—and, indeed, of suggesting that teachers occasionally read aloud to their classes—lies in the built-in **necessity**, for the oral performer, of coping with these aspects of poetic meaning. If one reads Henry V's lines, from Shakespeare's play about the mirror of all Christian kings, "But what art thou, thou idol Ceremony?" with a single heaviest stress on the word **art**, he is giving a sensible literal rendering of the line—but it is prose, and not poetry. Read the line as regularly iambic (but with an extra syllable at the end of the line) and see how the regularity of the pattern increases the "size" of the line. Note how the unusual stress on the first **thou** increases Henry's confrontation of ceremony, which he is addressing. In this sense, poetry is almost always more "formal" than prose, more densely patterned with respect to stresses. And notice how the greater formalization of the pattern automatically affects tempo. The two readings of the line feel very different from one another.

Details of the study of prosody are almost endless. There is a highly-developed vocabulary for explaining many, many subtleties in patterns. But the vocabulary should never be allowed, with students, to overshadow the point: **prosody is a study of the heartbeat of poems.**

One must, naturally, take into account pauses in language. While feet, in traditional poetry, probably have rough temporal equivalence within a given line, mathematical exactness is neither desirable nor possible. Pauses within the lines of poetry for rhetorical reasons are called **caesuras** ("cuts," from the Latin verb "to cut"). For example, in the line from Henry V, there is a caesura after the word "thou," signified here by the presence of the comma. Caesuras are a

vital aspect of the movement of lines—and there are pauses not so distinctly marked which are equally vital.*

While many kinds of feet have been identified in English verse, the usual ones are those already given (iambic, trochaic, pyrrhic), anapestic (x x /), dactylic (/ x x), and spondaic (/ /). **Most traditional English verse can be scanned with these feet alone.

Patterning in traditional poetry also involves rhyme.*** Rhyme sometimes seems simply ornamental, but when well used it is clearly an aspect of meaning. It catches the attention. It intensifies meanings by heightening sound and the feelings tied to both sound and lexical intentions. A rhyme which exists simply because the poet has to live up to his/her rhyme scheme but which does **not** seem tied to logical and emotive progression will signal weaknesses in the poem. (Certain kinds of comic verse and of nonsense verse may, on the other hand, capitalize on such "flat" rhymes for the sake of the humor.)

Rhyme, like meter, is part of the musicality of verse. Effective rhymes function as harmonious notes function in music; or, just as discord may create desired effects in music, harsh rhymes may produce the effect the poet wants. "Musicality" should not be taken to mean simply "pleasant sounds," "smooth sounds," "lulling sounds."

As meter gives architecture to a poetic line, in conjunction with meter rhyme gives architecture to **bundles** of lines. We called a metrical "bundle" a **foot**; a **rhyme** "bundle" is a stanza. Traditional poetry has many kinds of bundles—and indeed, each poet may invent his/her own. A rhymed couplet is a bundle of two lines:

> And yet, by heaven, I think my love as fair
> As any she belied with false compare.
>
> from Shakespeare, Sonnet 130

Here, the metrical bundles are iambic. Since there are five per line, the lines are iambic pentameter. A bundle of three lines is a triplet or tercet; a bundle of four's, a quatrain; a bundle of five's, a cinquain; of six's, a sixain; of seven's, a septet; of eight's, an octet or octave. Of these, the quatrain and couplet are the most frequent. Special names are attached to special kinds of bundles: among quatrains, for example, there are the ballad stanza, the heroic quatrain, the **In Memoriam** stanza, and others. The ballad stanza rhymes alternately (designated thus: **abab**); its first and third lines are iambic tetrameter, its second and fourth lines iambic trimeter:

> They had not sailed a league, a league,
> A league but barely three,
> Until she espied his cloven foot,
> And she wept right bitterlie.

Here, there are metrical variations in lines 3 and 4: an anapest in the second foot in line 3 and in the first foot of line 4. Note that the rhyme scheme is abcd (**three** and **bitterly** rhyme, but **league** and **foot** do not). **abcb** is a very, usual variation of the **abab** scheme in the ballad stanza. Together, the meter and rhyme produce a strong rhythmical effect. In early modern English (prior to Shakespear's time), lines called "fourteeners" were common, lines made up of fourteen syllables (usually seven iambic feet). But for some reason, the English language cannot sustain very long lines, and fourteeners tended to break up into such quatrains as we have here:

> x / x / x / x / x / x / x /
> x / x / x / x / x / x / x /

If you beat out this pattern aloud (da DA da DA da DA da DA – da DA da DA da DA) you will hear easily enough how this happens.

One could give long lists of stanzaic patterns. Ultimately, it is interesting to know the names of the stanzas; but for beginning students, the **name** of patterns is far less important than the **fact** and **effects** of patterns. Why does one rhyme scheme seem "statelier" or "more formal" than another? Why does one seem "easy" and another "complicated"? Why does one seem "straightforward" and another "ingenious"? These are the kinds of questions which ought to be discussed with beginning students. It is even useful to try having them write their own poems in stanzaic patterns. Let them start with an unrhymed poem—something like a Japanese **haiku**:

> There is a bright star
> High above in the dark night
> And it speaks to me.****

---

*There is an amplification of this statement about pauses in the writer's textbook **The Art of Interpretation,** 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1972), pp. 486-487.

**These forms are adjectival. The nouns are iamb (or iambus), trochee, pyrrhic, anapest, dactyl, spondee.

***"English poetry," say Shapiro and Beum, "is overwhelmingly a poetry of rhyme." See Karl Shapiro and Robert Beum, **A Prosody Handbook** (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 86-106, for an extended discussion of rhyme.

****Haiku uses syllable count as a patterning device:

5 syllables
7 syllables
5 syllables

Then have them try rhyme. Ask them how (and why) the rhyme adds a "difference." Encourage them to talk about **feelings** for such things. (It isn't enough for them to say that they "like" or "don't like" a poem. Statements about "liking" sometimes have to wait upon understanding.

Free verse provides other kinds of problems. Verse which is so free as to have no temporal patterning at all is, for some poets and critics, not verse but prose. Some free verse is written in lines which have relatively the same temporal length. Some free verse counts the number of strong stresses per line but does not insist on feet. Some free verse is patterned by images—perhaps one clear image per line. Indeed, certain free verse poems **may** be primarily visual rather than auditory. Because free verse is so varied, it is hardly possible to cover it here.

Finally, then—as initially—it is of the greatest importance that a study of the movement of poetry (prosody) be related, from the outset, to the fact of **life** in the fact of patterning in the act of perception. Such movement is not **apart** from meaning but a vital component of meaning. Poems are to be felt—as Macleish says, "to be." Their being **is** their meaning.

NOTE: Patterns of **sound** are not, of course, restricted to rhyme. For a full discussion of sound patterns, see **The Art of Interpretation** already cited in this article.

Applications:

With this discussion in mind, let us move to the many ways in which we can involve students in an understanding of poetry, and, perhaps, a new appreciation of it.

The beginning point might well be with the first literature most of us remember—nursery rhymes. You might have each of the students in your class bring in the first or favorite nursery rhyme from their childhood. (They will probably remember one without any need to prepare, if you wish to do "on the spot" readings.) Once having read through these rhymes, you are ready to discuss **why** they could recall these particular selections over all the things they have read or heard since. The reason most often given, of course, is that these poems **rhyme**. So, rhyme can become a good beginning point for your discussion of poetry, because it is such an AUDITORY experience, whether you are recalling nursery rhymes or advertising slogans and jingles. The logical follow-up to this is that rhyme is one way we remember lots of things besides poetry. But rhyme is a basic tool for good poets as well as bad, since it gives them a way to organize a poem. And a poem is human experience in its most organized literary form.

From the students' work with nursery rhymes you might want to move on to song lyrics. They don't always rhyme, especially in some rock music, but there is always **some** organizing principle that holds the poem together. Now they are ready to hear and talk about the **sounds** and patterns created by those metric units Bacon (and others) calls "feet." Foot prosody functions strongly, once the student gets the sound of it in his/her ear. In fact, foot patterns can become sound-effect devices. Take for an example, that funny three-syllable pattern called an anapest. Its pattern of two unstressed syllables followed by a stress, x x / , produces a regular, rocking rhythm that is unmistakable. To prove it, have a student read the nursery rhyme "Hey, diddle diddle." Listen especially to the **last** line, since that is where the poem is its most rhythmic:

And the dish ran away with the spoon.

The "running" rhythm is clearly apparent when the line is read aloud. It gallops as clearly as do the opening lines of Robert Browning's "How They Carried the Good News from Gent to Aix":

I spring to the saddle, and Joris, and he.
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped, all three

Browning's ear was clearly tuned to the sound of horses' hooves in those lines. You might point out that the composer Rossini does the same thing musically in the "Lone Ranger" music of the **William Tell Overture**. There the rhythm matches Browning's—x x / x x / x x /—the beat is unmistakable.

The alternate iambic-trochaic rhythm that is basic to most rock music makes another point of the way a poet uses prosody and patterning. Many rock songs begin with a pattern that is essentially a four-beat phrase, / (x) / (x) / (x) / (x). From that four-beat phrase—a stressed beat followed by an unstressed syllable-beat—the musician works the pattern of the rest of the song. If you want to call it eight beats to the measrure, fine. By so doing, we've established that a basic ingredient of rock music is a poetry rhythm called trochaic tetrameter. If you can let your students **hear** the rhythm, you've moved poetry and prosody into their auditory world.

From that point you might have them listen to the ways in which musicians and poets work variations on the rhythms of those lines. The poet often deliberately breaks or changes his/her "beat" just as the musician changes his/hers. Try some songs—lyrics only—to see the way the songwriter conforms to the rhythms of the music—what Professor Bacon called the "abstract pattern (that) remains in the poet's ear."

The long, rolling, flowing cadences of Whitman's poetry are an excellent source of sound patterns that are built on basic speech rhythms. The **words**

Whitman chooses are often unusual, even archaic, but the sonorous sense of the sound-shape of the line is constantly present when any of Whitman's poetry is read aloud.

The other major contribution to a student's increased enjoyment of poetry is the yield of the effect that alliteration has on a line, lines, or a whole poem—and this effect can **only** be appreciated when the pattern is HEARD. True, you can recognize repeated letters, but **letters** are really only symbols and are, at best, unreliable alliteration sign-posts. "Sugar," "sieze," and "visor" all "alliterate" if you choose only to use the letter "s" as a guide. Only when you confirm the difference **by ear** can you be sure of the three different sounds that serpentine symbol produces.

You might experiment with some e. e. communigs poems for the alliterations he works, producing "sound effects" that create moods with **words** that seem logically unrelated. The active effect that such a line as "what if a which of a how of a wind" produces is just one of countless examples you might find. From cummings you might move to student creations, putting together phoneme patterns to create a mood-effect, just as poets do when **they** are creating poems. Lush, soft, warm nasal sounds, brisk crisp dentals, firecracker plosives will give your classes lots of creative opportunities while they are learning the craft of poetic creation—"the art of science of patterning in poetry."

The Author

Dr. Wallace A. Bacon is the President of the Speech Communication Association and is a Professor and Chairman of the Oral Interpretation Department at Northwestern University in Evanston. He has taught English at Northwestern University and has been Visiting Professor at Universities of California, Wisconsin, Philippines and Santo Tomas. He has edited and contributed to many speech journals. He has written nine books, two of which are widely popular oral interpretation texts.

ACTIONAL PROCEDURES IN TEACHING AFRO-AMERICAN LITERATURE

Delores Tigue
and
Brenda Watson

Many teachers are of the opinion that literature taught to children should pertain to some imaginative literary creed which they were taught to believe in when studying Yeats, Keats, and Lawrence in college. This "creed" often excluded most "black literature." Yet, at the time and even before this pontifical dictum or creed was being instilled in future teachers, there was being written black poetry and prose of considerable vitality and even often of distinction.

Educators have often wrongly assumed that all "black literature" is about, and for, blacks. Yet, that assumption is as absurd as the refusal would be to recognize the changes within the writings of two different centuries.

A few teachers, however, are undeniably undergoing a process of maturation regarding this milieu. Universities are also contributing to this process which could mean more responsible and creative efforts to meet a student's needs. This development can only lead to the elimination of those cultural lags that undermine civic harmony, and to an increase of racial tolerance, and literary appreciation.

True, much black literature is literature of pathos, but it can transcend this to become works of knowledge and perspective when used in the classroom successfully as dramatic projections. Black literature projects many of the characteristics of present day "nonblack" literature. It runs the gamut from attitudes of sympathy and indignation for those who suffer easily and helplessly (children, the ill, and deprived), to happy occasions. Most black literature, when introduced using effective teaching techniques, can bring about the sudden sense of experiencing an unprepared-for intimacy with fictional characters and situations, and can leave a student in a state of hungry expectancy. And this, after all, is the objective of every good literature and language teacher.

In Project Speak, we depend heavily upon what can best be called actional techniques in teaching literature. Many of our students are impervious to certain kinds of literary symbols. They cannot, for instance, completely comprehend written language, and to effect real understanding we find that "actional procedures" are necessary. A child can come to understand abstractions like love and prejudice, not only through words, but also through actual acting-out of fictitious events.

Regarding methods and techniques for teaching black literature, these "actional procedures" sometimes take the form of choral reading or speaking. This is very effective in crystallizing a fondness for literature as well as developing interpretive skills. We practice letting (a) individual students volunteer to read the roles of characters who have solo lines to speak, (b) letting all group members, speaking as one voice, serve as the narrator to read the rest of the lines, and (c) most importantly, ask students for suggestions on how the presentations can be improved.

One of the writer's classes discussed ways in which the drama of "Beware: Do not read this poem," by Ishmael Reed, could be portrayed. The students decided to have three ominous-sounding voices call out the statements:

"Do not read this poem"
"This poem has your eyes/This poem has your head
"This poem is the reader and the reader this poem." [1]

Then the students decided that they would employ a long pause before the whole class whispered the last chilling lines:

Statistics: The U. S. bureau of missing persons reports that in 1968 over 100,000 people disappeared leaving no solid clues
nor trace only
a space in the lives of their friends.[2]

(Ishmael Reed, 1970)

---

[1] Ishmael Reed, Copyright 1972. Ishmael Reed is director of Reed, Cannon and Johnson Communications, Berkeley, California.

[2] Ibid, p. 34

This poem is also ideal for teaching poetic technique. The teacher may encourage students to note if there are any definite stanzaic patterns, or are any recurring words, sounds, phrases, sentences, or rhythms. The pupils may be asked to consider, also, why lines are of varying lengths and why there are spaces or gaps in the lines.

Another facet of the actional procedure method is role-playing. A poem that is ideal in implementing this method is "Booker T. and W.E.B. DuBois" by Margaret Danner and Dudley Randall.

"It seems to me," Said Booker T.,
said W.E.B.[3]
(Margaret Danner and Dudley Randall)

As is the case with much ethnic literature, the teacher must orient students with some historical or background information. After this, student adaptation of the roles should not present a problem.

Another type of poem which simplifies the teaching of black literature using the actional procedure methods is that genre of literature that the medieval troubadors, minstrels, bards and minnesingers carried through their lands. Thus genre includes the songs and poems of the people of that period. Likewise, the Negro slaves preserved and spread their cultural heritage through the medium of spoken verse and songs. The "pattern" is the same as that of the Negro spiritual, a question and answer form or "call and response," as it was commonly known.

One of the best known of the old-timers is a "call and response" or question and answer poem, "Did you Feed My Cow?"

"Did you feed my cow?"
Flop. Flop. Flop.
(Rollins, 1965).[4]

MATERIAL REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

MATERIAL REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

[3]From **Poem Counterpoem**, Copyright©, 1966, by Margaret Danner and Dudley Randall. Reprinted by permission of Broadside Press.

[4]Charlemae Rollins, ed. "Did you Feed My Cow?" **Famous American Negro Poets** (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1965) pp. 10-11.

Sometimes a unifying device can be used. Using this device, an important part of the teaching experience again would be a thorough explanation and discussion with the students concerning the lives of the people about whom the poems are written. For instance, the teacher can choose a group of poems dedicated to or about famous black individuals. The following are examples of poetry which can be dramatized very well: "American Gothic" (In honor of Satchel Paige) by Samuel Allen (Paul Vesey)

MATERIAL REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

To Satch

Sometimes I feel like I will never stop

MATERIAL REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

"How about that!"
(Hayden, 1967)

Margaret Walker's poem, "For Mary McLeod Bethune," is a beautiful tribute to one of the world's most famous educators. It reads:

Great Amazon of God behold your bread

MATERIAL REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

(Rollins, 1965)

The poet, Robert Hayden, writes eloquently of the beautiful, needful thing.
(Hayden, 1967)

It is clear that a unit consisting of this kind of black literature can illuminate the positives of the black race and should increase the black child's self-concept. More importantly, since children who are more accepting of others are also more self-accepting, nonblack children who are exposed to such a unit may also develop more positive racial attitudes and therefore more positive self-concepts.

Black literature can also be very effective in teaching students to understand and appreciate the diversities and similarities between the various ethnic groups. This understanding and appreciation encompass language variations and values. The study can even lessen cultural disparities.

The following poem, like most of Paul L. Dunbar's poems, accomplishes our objectives effectively. For example, in Project Speak one of our most important teaching objectives is to enable students to develop the ability to differentiate between standard and nonstandard English as it is written and spoken. Obviously, the poem, "The Party," can generate much comparative language discussion since it is written in nonstandard English. The following lines are excerpts from "The Party":

Dey had a gread big pahty down to Tom's de

MATERIAL REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

MATERIAL REMOVED DUE TO COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS

in deir place . . . . . .
(Paul L. Dunbar)[5]

Regarding values and cultures, the teachers should find it easy to initiate class discussions by asking such questions as: (1) Why was the party such a great occasion? (2) As a religious figure, was Elder Thompson wrong because he wanted to join in the dance? (3) How did the people come to relish such foods as "coons and hog jowls?"

Another aspect of our teaching program, and a controversial one, is the teacher's attitude concerning memorization of literary selections. This idea has negative connotations because many teachers force students to learn selections as an easy way to arrive at a grade for each child. This is not, however, our objective. The students we work with enjoy memorizing and reciting selections, primarily because we first ascertain that the student likes and has judged the selection worthy of being committed to memory. That is to say, we always base memorization upon a system of natural selection. In addition, it is found that the greatest motivation, especially with a few students who are "dead-set" against literature, is to choose to read a selection that is (1) not too hard to comprehend and (2) reminds a student of people he knows and experience he has had. This, of course, will be accomplished by using the previously discussed teaching methods.

Most importantly, and what the teacher must always keep in mind, is that children love to feel that they have something to show as a result of their studies. More specifically, the students love to let others see what they have learned. The single important factor in our success with children is that we always invite supervisors, faculty members, parents or another class to hear learned literary selections. Whenever possible, make the child the "actor" in a lesson. When the student is actively and demonstrably involved, literary selections, black or otherwise, suddenly and somewhat magically become high priorities in his/her cultural environment.

[5]Paul L. Dunbar, "The Party," **The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar** (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1948) pp. 304-308. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Selected Bibliography

Adoff, Arnold, ed. **I Am the Darker Brother.** New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. 1968.

Brown, Sterling A., Arthur P. Davis, and Ulysses Lee, ed. **The Negro Caravan.** New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1970.

Hayden, Robert, ed. **Kaleidoscope.** New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1967.

Johnson, John H., ed. **Black World.** Chicago: Johnson Publishing Co., (Annual Poetry Issues), 1970.

Rollins, Charlemae. **Famous American Negro Poets.** New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1965.

The Authors

Ms. Brenda Watson is a language teacher with Project Speak in East St. Louis, teaching K-6 at Dunbar School.

Mrs. Delores Tigue is a language teacher with Project Speak in East St. Louis, teaching at Rock Junior High.

THE PRESENCE OF LITERATURE

Lila A. Heston

The students of today live in a world partly composed of radio, film, television, and recorded music. Their awareness of these, and other media, is often unconscious, for they have usually known them from the time they first became a perceiving and responsive being. But their awareness can be sophisticated, for their experience with the media has been extensive and, in some ways, profound. No matter how they respond to the media, however, they respond, and most of today's students would find it impossible to contemplate an existence without the images, words, and sounds of the media. For them, film, television, radio, and recordings are an integral part of life. For some, they **are** life. These young people have no difficulty in perceiving the life in a film, for example, because its images and sounds cohere for them into a living whole to which they can relate in a responsive and feeling way. The film moves them and moves for them, seeming, in most instances, to be alive. In short, the film has presence.

When confronted with a piece of literature, however, many of these same students find it dead, flat, and static. For them, it has no life, is without meaningful existence, lacks presence. They are unable to perceive the living presence in a poem, play, or story for they see only the printed words that contain this presence. Literature neither moves them nor moves for them.

What is **presence** in literature? In a discussion of presence, Philip Wheelwright makes this observation:

> A person's sense of presence is likely to be most strongly marked and most incontestably evident in his/her relationship, at certain heightened moments, with another human person. This is as it should be, for an individual sinks into a deadening egoism (however much he may gild it with idealistic verbiage or mitigate it by outward acts) unless he occasionally exercises and stretches his ability to realize another person as an independent presence to whom homage is due, rather than as merely an interruption of continuity in his environment.[1]

It is in this way that most of us think of **presence**, as an experience we have felt in connection with people. We verify the presence of other people in a varietyof ways. In an article on sensory approaches to literature which appears in another section of this monograph, Professors Kleinau and McHughes suggest two good exercises which will help to establish the way we perceive individuals and their presence in our lives. Their exercise entitled "Hands" would be an especially good one with which to begin. This experience illustrates the visual way in which we ascertain the presence of someone. Their series of exercises in sound is also valuable. These might be amplified by asking people to identify other class members by **voice alone**. Use of blindfolds or the puppet stage of the "hands" exercise would be needed for this. Another nonverbal technique is to have class members sit in a circle, close their eyes, then raise their hands, when they believe you have come up behind them. You could vary the exercise by having half of the class with eyes closed while one member from the other half approaches one of the people who has closed eyes. A further refinement would be to ask that the person who was approached, try to identify by name the person who has come up behind them. This leads to a **series** of means for establishing presence. Through sound, perhaps a fragrance, but, most of all, an almost indefinable **awareness**—an "aura"—that establishes for us a person's physical **presence**.

Literature also has its own sense of presence, although as Wheelwright notes, it is "hard to find appropriate words for speaking about the sense of presence out of which all that is genuine in religion, myth, art, and philosophy has originally grown."* Though presence is difficult to describe, all those who love literature have felt themselves **in the presence of** a number of individual works. When this occurs, the work emerges as an individual entity that we know and experience, as real to us as the people around us, and, in some ways, more real.

ESTABLISHING LITERARY PRESENCE—A BEGINNING

How is it possible to encourage your students to perceive presence in literature? There is, certainly, no guaranteed method for bringing all students to any single end. There are, however, ways of helping at least **some** students to respond to literature as fully as they respond to the people and the media surrounding them. In order to do so, the teacher must, of course, be fully committed to the belief that literature does, indeed, contain a living presence. For if the teacher fails to feel and respond to the life of the literature, his or her student, will surely fail to do so.

---

[1] **Metaphor and Reality** (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), pp. 154-155.

*Wheelwright, p. 154. For those interested in pursuing further the study of presence in literature, see Wallace A. Bacon's **The Art of Interpretation**, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1972), Chap. 3. Bacon bases his conception of presence upon Wheelwright but applies it to the study and practice of interpretation.

The teacher's genuinely felt enthusiasm can provide an atmosphere which helps to nourish a similar enthusiasm. But, as all teachers know, enthusiasm alone will not, in and of itself, open students and literature to each other. Enthusiasm in the classroom, however genuine, must be channeled into methods and approaches that are of pedagogically practical value.

THE TWO-LANE ROAD

There are two approaches to literature that may help students to see it as a living reality: the dramatistic and the interpretation approaches. Neither is new, and both have been tested and tried in a variety of classrooms. Stated simply, the dramatistic approach is one in which each piece of literature is seen as a small drama, containing someone who is doing or saying something, in a location in time and space, and for some specific reason.* Interpretation is a discipline, with origins in classical Greece, which views the performance of literature as both means and end. The student performs the literature as a way of studying it and of bringing him or her into immediate contact with its unique presence. At the same time,

*The dramatistic approach is based upon theories developed by Kenneth Burke and has been used by a large number of teachers, students, and critics. See Burke's **A Grammar of Motives** (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945).

the performance is valued in and of itself, for it expresses his/her understanding of and relationship with the work. The performance also brings the literature to the classroom audience, an act which can be an aesthetic experience for the spectators as well as for the performer.

The dramatistic and the interpretation approaches fit naturally together, for the former provides the interpreter with a way of contacting the life of a literary work. It provides a framework that encourages him/her to ask certain kinds of questions about a work, and these questions, in turn, aid in understanding and performance of the work. In a broad sense, the dramatistic approach helps the interpreter to realize and enact the life that lies within literature.

The dramatistic approach assumes that every work of literature emerges from one or more speakers. Many poems, for example, have only one speaker, who often seems to serve as a representation of the poet, but other poems may have several speakers, as is true of a number of ballads and poems that tell a story. Plays, of course, normally have a number of speakers, and novels and short stories have a narrator and a variety of characters whose words and selves are presented by the narrating figure. Just as the speaker of a poem may seem to represent the poet, so the narrator of a novel may emerge for us as a figure like the writer. But the dramatistic approach tends to think of the figures in fiction primarily in terms of the fiction itself, not in terms of the author (Keats, Frost, or Jane Austen) speaking out in the work. This is not to say that relationships between the writer and his/her work are unimportant but, rather, that the best way to focus upon an individual work is to do so directly and immediately. And the dramatistic approach enables one to do just this.

HOW DOES "DRAMATISTICS" WORK?

It's possible to think of the dramatistic approach as being similar to the journalists's approach in a reporting assignment, as Don Geiger suggests when he proposes that one ask these questions about literature:

> Who is performing what action of though or feeling or deed?
>
> Where, when, how, and why performed?[2]

There is an additional question that is useful: to whom is the speaker speaking? Try asking these questions, in your classrom, of Robert Browning's "My Last Duchess," and your students will find themselves discovering a good deal about the poem.* The answer to the **who** part of the question is, initially, very simple: The Duke of Ferrara. But encourage your students to explore the nature of the Duke. What are his qualities, characteristics, and abilities? What kind of man is the Duke? What do we know of his past and what do we know of his present? Just who, is the fullest sense of the word, is the Duke?

What is the Duke doing in the poem? First, he is, of course, talking to an emissary from an unnamed Count, the emissary having come to arrange a marriage between the Duke and the Count's daughter. In briefly answering the **what** question, we've already discovered **to whom** the Duke is speaking: the emissary. But what, in a larger sense, is the Duke doing? Among other things, he is commanding and controlling the situation, making certain that the emissary understands how he views himself, his position, his last Duchess, and his future one. Here, **what** begins to merge with **why**, for what the Duke does in the poem is tightly linked with why he does so. In the same way, **how** the Duke performs the poem's action is bound up with his motives and his nature, for both are expressed and revealed through his manner of speaking. A full exploration of **who**, **what**, **why**, and **how** in this poem will reveal much of what the poem itself is concerned with.**

BEYOND THE CHARACTERS—"WHERE" AND "WHEN"

Although the **where** and **when** questions are not always applicable to every poem, it's useful to ask them to see whether they are significant to an individual work. If you ask your students **where** the Duke is, they will come to realize that he is in his palatial home, in a room containing various objects of art, and that the room is at least on the second floor (as is indicated when the Duke speaks of "the company below" and then says, "Nay, we'll go/Together down"). Obviously, the Duke himself has chosen the location for his conference with the emissary, and this particular room enables him to uncover the portrait of his last Duchess and to impress the emissary with his art collection. Some of your students may know that the Duke lives in Italy, for Ferrara is a city in Italy, which was once ruled by the powerful Este

---

[2] See Geiger's **The Sound, Sense, and Performances of Literature** (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1963), p. 61.

*As "My Last Duchess' is well known, easily available, and fairly long, the text of the poem has not been included here.

**For other exercises and applications that pertain to the work in this section you may want to refer again to the techniques suggested for the establishment of personality and character in the earlier article in this series that discusses the dramatic dimensions of literature. — Ed.

Family at the time when the Medici family ruled Florence. But those details of history, though interesting, are not essential to our understanding the Duke that Browning has created. If your students ask **when** the Duke is speaking, they will find that the poem doesn't specify either time of day or year, but they will certainly realize that the Duke lives in an earlier century, which they may correctly guess to be during the Italian Renaissance.

"My Last Duchess" is a fairly long and complex poem. In a brief space, it is impossible to do more than sketch some of the possibilities inherent in the dramatistic approach. But it seems certain that students will more easily apprehend the poem and its presence if they focus upon the Duke of Ferrara, for it is his presence which gives the poem its presence.

BRINGING "PRESENCE" TO LIFE

They may come even closer to apprehending the poem's presence if they are encouraged to perform it, for in attempting to enact it they are helped to experience at least some of what the Duke himself experiences. His words are an expression of himself, and they arise from his feelings, thoughts, and motives. If you students are encouraged to think and feel with the Duke as he speaks the poem's words, then the words will take on some of the life that is inherent within them—the life that is often overlooked by students because it is neither felt nor perceived.

See if some of your students, either male or female, would like to perform the poem or select a few who might enjoy the experience. Try to make the performing situation easy and comfortable, possibly by using some class time for rehearsals. Select a student, perhaps a rather shy one, to be the silent emissary. With the assistance of your class, define the poem's location, deciding such matters as where the emissary should stand, where the portrait of the last Duchess hangs, where the statue of Neptune is displayed. Encourage your class to define other aspects of the room. Is it large? Is there a high ceiling? Are there windows? Where are the windows? These details are not part of the poem, but questions about them are legitimate, for the poem suggests a room, and the room, like the Duke himself, is concrete and real. Anyone performing the Duke must know, as the Duke does, the nature of the room in which he stands, even though the poem does not specify all its details. In the same way, it is legitimate to ask what the Duke looks like and what he is wearing, for what we wear is an expression of what we are and also helps to make us what we are, and the Duke obviously has a physical self and is wearing some kind of clothing.

After exploration of this kind, ask one of your students to perform the first thirteen lines of the poem:

> That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
> Looking as if she were alive. I call
> That piece a wonder, now: Frá Pandolf's hands
> Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
> Wil't please you sit and look at her? I said
> "Frá Pandolf" by design, for never read
> Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
> The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
> But to myself they turned (since none puts by
> The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
> And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
> How such a glance came there; so, not the first
> Are you to turn and ask thus.

Have him (or her) try the lines three, four, five times, encouraging him/her to enact the Duke by raising questions of this sort. What does your last Duchess look like? Was she pretty? What is she wearing in the painting? Do you, as the Duke, think it's a good painting? Are you pleased with it? Why do you keep the painting covered? Why don't you want anyone else to see the Duchess? How do you feel about the emissary? Why do you want him to see the painting? Such questions will help your student-performer to understand the Duke and, in so doing, the student may move closer to becoming the Duke and understanding the poem. When such questions are directed to a performer, they also help the rest of the class to explore the poem and to understand it more fully.

You may want, initially, to restrict performance work to relaxed rehearsal processes within the classroom, asking first one student and then another to perform segments from "My Last Duchess." Or you may want to have three or four students work on the poem outside of class and then have each perform it during a class period. However you choose to handle performance it's important that you keep expectations to a reasonable level. No young adolescent is capable of enacting fully and accurately the sophisticated, mature, poised, and fluent Duke of Ferrara. But a young adolescent is likely to understand more of the Duke by performing him than by simply looking at the words he speaks on the printed page. In enacting the Duke, he may come to feel the force of the presence of the Duke and, thus, of the poem.

DOES IT WORK IN OTHER LITERATURE?

All characters in fiction profit from a dramatistic approach and from performance. "My Last Duchess," a dramatic monologue, clearly benefits from both, for the Duke is a flesh-and-blood figure whose whole self needs to be evoked and felt if the poem is to be understood. The silent reader of the poem needs to see and hear him, or the poem remains static and meaningless. The same can be said for other characters in poems, such as those in Edgar Lee Masters' **Spoon River Anthology**, as well as for those in plays, novels, or short stories. Huckleberry Finn, for

example, is both narrator of and participant in his story, but he is always a boy with body, voice, clothes, background, mind, personality, flaws, and virtues. If one can discover the **who**, **what**, **where**, **when**, **how**, and **why** of Huck Finn, in both his roles, one has come to understand a good deal of the novel that bears his name.

But what of fictional speakers who are not characters in the sense in which the word has been used? Many speakers in poems and narrators in prose fiction lack the flesh-and-blood existence possessed by the Duke of Ferrara and Huck Finn. How useful is the dramatistic approach to a work presented by this kind of speaker? And how valuable is it for the student to study such a work through performance?

Many of Emily Dickinson's poems come to us from speakers who are, in certain ways, undefined, as is true of this one:

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played
At wrestling in a ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries' but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were towards eternity.

If one asks **who** the speaker of this poem is, the answer is not easy. Presumably, the speaker is a woman, if one takes the traditional view that the primary speaker in a work is of the same sex as the writer unless there is clear indication to the contrary. And this is the view taken here, but many would argue, with some justification, that the speaker of this poem could as easily be a man. Indeed, the sex of the speaker is not of much consequence, although, for this dicsussion, the speaker will be viewed as female. Obviously, we don't know such things as where the speaker lived, whether she was married, what she looked like, how old she was at death, or what her name was. What we do know is that she is now dead and exists in a state of immortality. Although, in a literal sense, her body apparently resides in the grave of which she speaks in the fourth stanza, her body is not now significant. The **where** of this poem is not the grave, for the speaker is really located in the state or condition of immortality, a place above and beyond our finite conceptions of space and time. The speaker of this poem is not so much a body as a sensibility, a fleshless entity privileged by her immortal condition to give us the perspective she has now gained.

From this perspective, she tells us something of her former condition and of her death. Although she herself could not "stop for Death/He kindly stopped" for her. Death, then, came without her willing it but was evidently not a frightening event and Death was not a fearful figure, for his act of stopping for her was a "kindly" one. It was, however, an event experienced in isolation, as Death's "carriage" contained only himself, the speaker, and immortality. She had, she tells us, once known both "labor" and "leisure" but she relinquished these for the "civility" of Death; here, there's the suggestion that Death, though univited, was somehow desirable, and, again, there's an emphasis upon personable qualities which make Death seem a pleasant figure. Indeed, Death, with his kindness, carriage, and "civility," begins to sound like a gentleman. The speaker's journey to the grave is described in the third stanza. On one level, this sounds like a literal description of her trip to the grave site. On another level, the description sounds like the journey through life to death: the scene with the playing children would, on this level, represent the speaker's childhood; the "fields of gazing grain" suggest a fruitful period, just before the harvest of one's life-ventures is gathered; and the "setting sun" is, of course, a familiar metaphor for the final period of a human life. If the journey to the grave is viewed in this way, then we begin to see that the speaker was accompanied by Death throughout a long period of her life and not just during the act of dying, a view that will be confirmed in the last stanza. In the fourth stanza, the grave itself is described and in a rather pleasant way, for to the speaker the grave is a "house" and without any of macabre, dark, or frightening associations often connected with graves. In the final stanza, the speaker specifically talks of time. Here we learn that she has been dead for "centureies," although we are uncertain whether she means "centuries" literally or is expressing, through hyperbole, her sense of much time having passed. However long a century may be, each one, she tells us, has seemed "shorter than the day," in life, when she first realized that Death was her ultimate destination—or, as she puts it, that "the horses' heads/Were towards eternity."

In dramatistic terms, this brief paraphrase of the poem has helped to define the speaker, clarifying **who** she is. Differing from the Duke of Ferrara, she lacks a body and a specific location in time and space, being, it was suggested earlier, essentially a sensibility. This

sensibility arises from all the details contained in the poem, or, to put it another way, from her perceptions, views, and attitudes upon her own life, death, and immortality. From her location in immortality, she talks without anger, fear, regret, or bitterness. She is informed, calm, mature, and wise, enabled to do the seemingly impossible: to talk of her own death. **To whom** does she speak? To anyone who comes along, to anyone with eyes to read the poem or ears to hear her voice. She tells us of her experience because it is significant to her and because she wishes to share her privileged perspective with those who have not experienced death.

Although the speaker in the Dickinson poem and the Duke of Ferrara have their differences, they are alike in one way, as are all fictional speakers: both are the consequences of their past and present experiences. For both, past and present merge into the experience contained in the poem each speaks. A direct way to get at either poem is to approach it dramatistically, in terms of the speaker. The poem's presence is conveyed to us through the speaker, and in coming to understand the speaker we come a little closer to being in the poem's presence.

Much can be said about the Dickinson poem and from a variety of positions. The poem can be discussed in terms of its relationship to Emily Dickinson, to the time in which she lived, or to her other works. Such relationships are important and the exploration of them may reveal much that is useful. But none of these explorations moves the student directly to the poem itself, as a unique presence. The dramatistic approach, on the other hand, forces the student to focus sharply upon the experience being expressed by the poem's speaker. The poem enacts a specific experience that has been lived and felt by the being who speaks the poem. If the student can perceive and apprehend this experience, he/she is likely to feel the force of the poem's presence and to respond to it.

THE DICKINSON CHALLENGE—PRESENCE BEYOND LIFE AND LIVING

There is no better way of furthering the student's process of coming to terms with the poem's experience than to ask him/her to perform it. Let him/her first view the poem in dramatistic terms, thinking of it as an experience that comes from a speaking, thinking, and feeling figure, not as a flow of words upon a piece of paper. Then ask the student to perform it, a process that helps to move him/her into the position of the speaker, requiring that he/she see, feel, think, and react as the speaker does.

With the Emily Dickinson poem, for instance, it's important that the performer try to imagine what it is like to be immortal, to exist in a condition beyond life and death—and then to move, imaginatively, into this condition. Within this state, the performer should begin the poem, thinking back, as the speaker does, to that moment when Death "kindly stopped for me," creating the memory from which these words arise. As the speaker sees the encounter with death in terms of a personified Death and a carriage, so should the performer do the same. No matter that this encounter is not logical or realistic. For the woman of this poem, the encounter with death is expressed through a metaphor, but the metaphor becomes pure decoration unless it is felt as a reality. The metaphor is meaningless to the student unless he/she can experience it as the speaker does, and the enactment of the poem helps him/her to view the image as the poem intends it to be viewed. Encourage the performing student to progress through the entire poem in the ways suggested, working constantly to see through the eyes of the figure who utters the words of the poem.

The dramatistic approach helps the student to see that a poem, or any piece of literature, has life, that it does move. The interpretation approach asks that he/she perform it, in the hopes that he/she will move **with** it and be moved **by** it. If the student sees it move, moves with it, and is moved by it, he/she may then come to feel himself/herself in its presence.

The Author

Dr. Lilla A. Heston is a Professor of Oral Interpretation at Northwestern University in Evanston. She has published many articles in speech journals and is active in state and national speech associations. She has performed as an actress and interpreter on film, television and records.

SELECTED RESOURCES

TEXTS

The following list of books was selected from the "Basic Book List for Interperetation," compiled by Professor Kenneth C. Crannell of Emerson College. The entire list appeared in the Speech Communication Association Interpretation Division **Newsletter** for Fall, 1974. Inquiries should be directed to Dr. James A. Pearse or Kristin B. Valentine, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101.

Bacon, Wallace A. THE ART OF INTERPRETATION. (2nd ed.) New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1972.

Bacon, Wallace A. and Robert S. Breen. LITERATURE AS EXPERIENCE. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc. 1959. (Out of print)

Coger, Leslie Irene and Melving R. White. READERS THEATRE HANDBOOK: A DRAMATIC APPROACH TO LITERATURE. (rev. ed.) Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1973.

Geiger, Don. THE SOUND, SENSE, AND PERFORMANCE OF LITERATURE. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1963.

Lee, Charlotte I. ORAL INTERPRETATION. (4th ed.) Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1971.

Mattingly, Alethea Smith and Wilma H. Grimes. INTERPRETATION: WRITER-READER-AUDIENCE. (2nd ed.) Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Co., Inc., 1970.

Michigan Speech Association, **Curriculum Guide Series**, Skokie, Illinois: National Textbook Co. Titles in the series include:

Speech Activities in the Elementary School
Speech and Drama in the Intermediate School
Speech Curriculum in the High School

SPEAKING OF INTERPRETATION. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1975.

SUMMER WORKSHOPS AND SYMPOSIUMS HELD IN ILLINOIS

Regular workshops in Oral Interpretation have been held annually at the following schools in Illinois:

Southern Illinois University

SIU Summer Workshop for Teachers. Contact Marion Kleinau or Janet McHughes, Department of Speech, SIU-Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois. Workshops for high school students are also available annually.

Illinois State University

Contact Ralph R. Lane for subjects and dates. Write him c/o Department of Theatre, Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois. The Department of Information Sciences usually has student workshops available.

Northwestern University

Northwestern University holds a regular summer symposium centering on some specific phase of literature-in-performance. For information contact Wallace A. Bacon, Chairman, Department of Interpretation, Northwestern University, 1822 Sheridan Rd., Evanston, Illinois. The Speech Department usually has high school workshops and available scholarships to students.

Eastern Illinois University

Summer workshops for both teachers and high school students are hosted each year at Eastern Illinois University. For dates and information, contact Department of Speech Communication, or Department of Theatre Arts, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois 61920.

Western Illinois University

Workshops have also been held at Western Illinois University. For information, write Department of Theatre, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois 61455.

Bradley University

Student and teacher summer workshops are usually available dealing with the contest interpretation events.

Note: Contact private and public universities near you. They may offer special extention courses for a group of interested teachers.

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS*

American Theatre Association
1317 F Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004

The Secondary School Threatre Association and Children's Theatre/Creative Drama Association are affiliates of this national theatre organization which holds an annual convention and publishes materials of interest to K-12 teachers.

Central States Speech Association
Dr. David M. Berg, Executive Secretary
University of Kansas
Lawrence, Kansas

Illinois Association of Teachers of English
Mr. Wilmer Lamar, Executive Secretary
100 English Building
Urbana, Illinois 61801

Illinois Speech and Theatre Association
Central Office, MacMurray College
Jacksonville, Illinois 62650

The ISTA publishes a newsletter and journal, holds an annual convention with meetings of interest to teachers, K-12, and sponsors workshops.

Illinois Theatre Association
P.O. Box 2480
Station A
Champaign, Illinois 61820

This organization has an annual convention, activities such as the Illinois High School Theatre Festival.

National Council of Teachers of English
1111 Kenyon Road
Urbana, Illinois 61801

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills is at the same address.

Oral Interpretation Workshop

This is a statewide organization of twelve universities and colleges which meets each Spring at a different campus each year. Membership is limited to college-level faculty and students, but visitors are always welcome. For information, contact Charlotte Waisman, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois 60625.

Speech Communication Association
5205 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, Virginia 22401

The SCA has two publications of interest to K-12 teachers: *Communication Education*, a journal for speech educators; and *Talk-Back*, a newsletter for teachers. *Communication Education*, formerly called *The Speech Teacher*, is available in college and university libraries, or one may subscribe by joining the SCA.

The ERIC/SCA Speech Communication Clearinghouse at the SCA address has listings of many materials and bibliographies.

*Each organization conducts an annual convention.

WORKSHOPS AND FESTIVALS

Colleges and universities in Illinois hold summer workshops and offer short courses for teachers. Contact the Speech Communication Department, English Department, Theatre Department, Communications Department, or in some cases, Departments of Education at each campus for further information or contact the Illinois Office of Education for a composite listing.

Illinois High School Threatre Festival

This annual event is cosponsored by the Illinois Office of Education and Illinois Threatre Association. It provides workshops in curricula and production techniques for students and teachers, full-length student productions, short experimental student productions, and special events.

Wisconsin Oral Interpretation Festival

Outside of Illinois there is a Wisconsin Oral Interpretation Festival held in the early Fall. Write William E. McDonnell at University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire.

Young Authors Conference

Each year, the Illinois Language Experience Special Interest Council and the Illinois Office of Education sponsor a young authors conference. Contact the Illinois Office of Education for information.

FABRIC OF LITERATURE VIDEOTAPES SERIES

The series examines oral approaches to the study of literature for the general language arts teacher. All tapes expand or give specific examples of material found in a Language Arts series of monograph publications also distributed free through Illinois Office of Education.

Steps in Choral Speaking

Time: Approximately 29 minutes.

General Audience: Language Arts Teacher, K-12.

Specific Application Audience: General Classroom Teacher, Elementary Grades.

Mrs. Lillian Parks, Director of Project Speak, District #189 in East St. Louis, presents a discussion and example of choral speaking as an activity for use with any ability level, K-12, to teach responsibility group cooperation, following directions, articulation, creative interpretation of the literature, literary components, (action words, sense words, alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhythm, etc.) and understanding of sounds and rhythms of poetry. The sixth grade class of June O'Donnell from Project Speak, Hawthorne School, demonstrates the beginning steps in developing choral speaking activities. The purpose is to present basic information about the use of the activity within the language arts general classroom curriculum.

Oral Dimension of Literature

Time: 28 minutes, 30 seconds.
General Audience: Language Arts Teachers, K-12.

Specific Application Audience: High School Literature Teachers or Beginning High School Oral Interpretation Teachers.

The tape includes a discussion with Dr. Jack Rang and two graduates of Eastern Illinois University who have used oral interpretation activities with different student age levels. Study applications of literary components providing the basis for literature (universality, individuality, suggestion, attitude) are made in short example oral readings. The purpose is to present these very basic components to teachers who possibly have not taught literature from this perspective previously.

Sensory Experiences in Literature

Time: 27 minutes, 29 seconds.

General Audience: Language Arts Teachers, K-12.

Specific Application Audience: High School Literature or Oral Interpretation Teachers.

Dr. Marion Klienau and Dr. Janet McHughes of the Speech Department at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, present innovative and inductive approaches to the teaching of literature. They attempt to help students experience literature and view literature through the student's own sensory perception which leads to a fuller and more comprehensive understanding of a given piece of literature. For students who have "turned off" literature, sensory experiences can be motivating techniques. On the tape, a Roethe poem, "Root Cellar," is used as a base with high school age students and sensory exploration and imagination tasks are created around the poem. The students are taken through a series of exercises leading to the experiencing of that one short poem. Then they are asked to share their experiences and feeling and eventually orally interpret the poem expressing those experiences and feelings. Like exercises can be used with all age groups.

Prosody

Time: 31 minutes.

General Audience: Language Arts Teacher, K-12.

Specific Application Audience: Language Arts Teachers Needing Basic Teaching Examples of Time, Meter and Sound Patterns.

Dr. Wallace Bacon, Chairperson of the Interpretation Department at Northwestern University, presents a discussion and specific examples of prosody in a two-part program. The first explores time and meter through nursery rhymes and free verse. Time and meter can extend poems to another dimension in meaning.

The second part explores sound patterns and the relationship between sound and meanings. Examples of rhyme, alliteration, assonance and consonance are presented.

This tape could be used for certain high school classes if the discussion topics above are applicable to the specific course content.

Chamber Theatre

Time: 28 minutes, 20 seconds.

General Audience: Language Arts Classrooms, 6-12.

Specific Application Audience: Literature and Oral Interpretation Teachers/Students Needing to See a Demonstration of How Chamber Theatre Could be used in the Classroom.

Chamber Theatre is a technique used to stage narrative literature. It serves as an excellent method of pointing out relationships and attitudes of characters and the narrator, the basic structure of the narrative literature and the role of the narrator in the work. Dr. Robert Breen of Northwestern University discusses the basics of the technique and then directs four, unrehearsed high school students in the opening passage of *Treasure Island* to demonstrate the involvement of the narrator in the first few pages. This is followed by a discussion with the students. The tape is a beginning example and students and teachers can then further explore other examples.